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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**

Thursday, March 7 , 2024

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

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James Comer [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Comer, Foxx, Grothman, Cloud, Palmer, Higgins, Sessions, Biggs, Mace, LaTurner, Fallon, Donalds, Perry, Timmons, Burchett, Greene, McClain, Boebert, Luna, Langworthy, Burlison, Raskin, Norton, Lynch, Connolly, Krishnamoorthi, Khanna, Mfume, Ocasio-Cortez, Bush, Brown, Stansbury, Garcia, Frost, Lee, Casar, Crockett, Goldman, Tlaib, and Pressley.

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 XI, 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 ordered.

The Committee will continue to use the electronic system for recorded votes on amendments and passage of the bills before the Committee. Of course, should any technical issues arise, which they, unfortunately, do from time to time in this Committee room, we will immediately transition to traditional roll call votes. Any procedural or motion related votes during today's markup will be dispensed with by a traditional roll call vote.

The first order of business is to welcome the return of our newest Member and a great former Member, Representative Pressley of Massachusetts, to the Committee. Congresswoman Pressley has been a Member of the House since 2019, and before that, she served 8 years on the Boston City Council. Congresswoman Pressley also spent her first two terms on this Committee, serving during the 116th and 117th Congresses, and we want to welcome you back, Representative Pressley. And I now recognize Ranking Member Raskin to issue any comments he may have.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and I also would like to welcome back our friend and colleague, Ms. Pressley. We have been far poorer in your absence, and we are far richer again in your presence and with your return. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The next order of business is ratifying the new subcommittee roster. The clerks have distributed the roster electronically. I ask unanimous consent that the Committee approve the appointments and assignments as shown on the roster.

Without objection, the Subcommittee roster is approved.

Our first item for consideration is **H.R. 4552**, the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2023. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 4552, Federal Information Security Modernization Act, a bill to improve the cybersecurity of the Federal Government, 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.

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. 4552, 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.

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

I am pleased to be considering the bipartisan and bicameral H.R. 4552, the Federal Information Modernization Act, or FISMA. This is the second time in 4 years the Committee has considered sweeping FISMA reform, the primary law governing Federal agency cybersecurity. We passed a similar version of this bill out of Committee in February 2022 before negotiations with the Senate stalled at the end of the last Congress. Since then, the bill has undergone substantial revision, with additional updates even since its reintroduction last July. My amendment in the nature of a substitute reflects the many positive discussions we have had with the Senate, the Administration, and industry stakeholders.

The U.S. Government's increasing use of and reliance on technology to provide information and services to all Americans makes Federal information systems a constant target of hostile nations, criminal organizations, and other malicious actors. It has been nearly 10 years since Congress last addressed the legislative structure and framework in such a comprehensive manner. In that time, we have seen all manner of enemies unleash a nonstop barrage of cyberattacks against American companies and Federal agencies. In addition to the increasing amounts of attacks, cyberattacks are becoming more sophisticated, and the damage they can inflict puts our Nation's security, our national security, the economy, even the personal safety of the American people at risk. As these threats evolve, our cybersecurity laws, FISMA, must also evolve.

A critical element of this legislation is to avoid box-checking exercises. The bill provides the executive branch with the tools it needs to update cyber policies without putting in overly prescriptive and rigid technical mandates into law. With the changes in my ANS, the Committee has made every effort to reduce agency turf wars and prevent duplicative efforts that only waste scarce resources and valuable time. My ANS helps further clarify the bill's reforms to the roles, responsibilities, and reporting channels of key Federal agencies: the Office of Management and Budget, which sets cyber policy; the Department of Homeland Security, which provides operational assistance; and the National Cyber director, which coordinates Agency incident response and congressional reporting. This bill also codifies the Federal chief information officer within the Office of Management and Budget with a direct FISMA policy coordination role under National Cyber Director. Overall, the ANS to H.R. 4552 represents a prudent and effective response to recent cyberattacks against our Nation and intrusions of American information systems. It updates authorities to strengthen the Federal Government's cyber defense as technology evolves and threats become more sophisticated, persistent, and malicious.

I want to thank Representative Mace and Connolly, the co-leads of our cybersecurity subcommittee, for their sponsorship, as well as Ranking Member Raskin and his staff's hard work and bipartisan collaboration to help us bring this bill up today. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation so that we may enact this important reform into law as soon as possible. I now recognize Ranking Member Raskin, an original cosponsor of the bill, for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. And thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am proud of our strong bipartisan record on FISMA, and I am grateful for your partnership and hard work, Mr. Chairman, on this vital legislation to modernize the cybersecurity framework.

The world's democratic governments are under the constant threat of cyberattack by malign state actors and cybercriminals alike, posing grave risks to our institutions and the ability of government to serve our citizens. In just a few recent examples, last August, the Canadian Government stated that a highly sophisticated Chinese state-sponsored actor hacked into one of its scientific research agencies. The same month, the U.K. announced that Russian hackers had stolen information about tens of thousands of British citizens through a hack of its electoral commission that had begun 2 years prior. And this January, Australia suffered its largest government cyberattack to date when Russian hackers stole 2-and-a-half documents from 65 departments and agencies.

The U.S. has not been spared from these kinds of cyberattacks. In Fiscal Year 2022, Federal agencies reported more than 30,000 Federal information security incidents, and OMB reported three major cyber incidents, all affecting personally identifiable information. In 2023, the U.S. Marshal Service suffered a ransomware attack related to sensitive law enforcement information. The DOT suffered a data breach, threatening the information of hundreds of thousands of current and former Federal employees; and multiple agencies, including the Department of Energy, reportedly suffered exploitation of software data through a technological vulnerability.

As the problem has been explained to me by Russia policy experts, Mr. Putin reasoned that he would never be able to beat America militarily, or economically, or in terms of political ideas, but he could engage in cyber espionage and cyber sabotage to create chaos in our country. President Biden has taken essential steps to strengthen our Nation's cybersecurity, issuing a 2021 executive order requiring agencies to implement a host of cybersecurity measures and issuing a comprehensive National Cyber Strategy and Implementation plan last year. Now Congress must act by passing FISMA to modernize this act, the cybersecurity framework, and requirements that protect our Federal information technology, data, and networks.

This bill is the product of years of cooperative, bipartisan work with our Senate counterparts, the Administration, experts, and industry. Among its many provisions, the bill clarifies the assignment of cybersecurity roles and responsibilities, including a National Cyber Director, which had not yet been established when the last FISMA modernization was signed into law a decade ago. The bill codifies the role of the OMB Federal Chief Information Security Officer, and strengthens civil liberties protections, including by requiring designation of chief privacy officers at Federal agencies. It also promotes modernization and next-generation cybersecurity principles that will allow agencies to prioritize cybersecurity risks with accurate, real-time information.

Modernizing FISMA is a big step toward the clear, coordinated, whole-of-government approach to Federal cybersecurity that our government needs to meet the challenges of the dangerous and constantly evolving threat landscape. I urge all of our colleagues to support this bill so we can get it to the President's desk as soon as possible. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the outstanding Chairwoman of the Cybersecurity Subcommittee on Oversight, Ms. Mace from South Carolina.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and, you know, regardless of what mainstream media says, we do bipartisan work on this Committee, and I appreciate the support of folks on both sides of the aisle. And I am going to date myself here, but 25 years ago, in 1999, I had just gotten my first job and I was a programmer, and the programming language I learned was COBOL. I learned 25 years ago that COBOL was legacy system, and we should not be using COBOL in our programming or as a basis for computer code. And yet here we are today, 25 years later, when it was legacy back then, talking about, having hearings on programming like COBOL legacy systems, et cetera.

And we have all these cyber breaches, supply chain risks. We have heard from witnesses speak about the promises and perils of AI, and we have got to do this modernization bill, and it is more important than ever that we move forward. And one of the things I want to say is that the importance of this bill that we have introduced is designed to help protect our Nation and its citizens from cybercrimes. An important role of our Subcommittee on the Oversight Committee is ensuring Federal information technology is well managed.

The Federal Government depends on IT systems for everything, from national defense to homeland security to administration of benefits programs that our citizens need. In all, we spend upwards of \$100 billion of tax dollars annually on Federal IT. The U.S. Government's increasing use of and reliance on technology to provide information and services to all Americans makes Federal information systems a constant target of hostile nations, criminal organizations, and other malicious actors that leverage modern advances in technology.

Attacks on Federal information systems are disruptive to agency missions and programs. They also risk exposure of sensitive national security and the public's private information, as we have seen over the years. In 2015, for example, the Office of Personnel Management announced the cyber theft of the sensitive information of approximately 25 million Americans. And in 2021, nine Federal agencies and a hundred private sector organizations were compromised by the 2020 SolarWinds software supply chain attack. Key aspects of our everyday life rely on the safe flow of data and information and computerized systems. That includes the delivery of medical care, the conduct of law enforcement activity, the operation of utilities, critical infrastructure, et cetera.

Cyberattacks have real consequences. One study estimated that malicious cyberactivity costs the U.S. economy more than \$100 billion annually, and another report estimated the annual cost to be \$250 billion every single year. Aside from the dollar loss, these breaches erode trust in key institutions, including the Federal Government. For instance, the Federal Government computer systems holding the confidential data of millions of Americans have been compromised by malicious actors too many times. We must have reliable safeguards against criminal and unauthorized use of data to ensure our economic security, our homeland security, and our national security.

The American people and those of us who serve on their behalf here in Congress are angry that foreign adversaries, such as China, are using cyberwarfare to attack and weaken our country. Defending ourselves against such stress and such adversaries requires intelligent, coordinated action and modernization at the Federal level. In other words, it requires FISMA. And so, the product of this bipartisan, bicameral coordination with the Senate companion, being led by Senators Peters and Hawley, the legislation reflects and incorporates positive input from Federal agencies and industry stakeholders. This bill underscores the ongoing need to modernize the protection of Federal information and information systems with a clear, coordinated, whole-of-government approach to Federal cybersecurity.

So, I would like to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for supporting this bill and hope we can pass it out of the Committee unanimously. Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. Does any other Member seek recognition on the bill?

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman?

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, at the appropriate time, I would offer an amendment.

Chairman COMER. The Clerk will distribute the amendment to all Members. OK. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The CLERK. Amendment to H.R. 4552, as offered by Mr. Sessions of Texas.

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

I reserve a point of order.

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Sessions, is recognized for 5 minutes to explain his amendment.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and let me start by saying that the gentlewoman, the young Chairwoman of the Subcommittee, Ms. Mace, has done an outstanding job, which I do support the bill as well as the bipartisan work that would accompany that.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to offer an amendment to the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2023 to simplify and harmonize private sector reporting requirements for major cybersecurity incidents. As our young Chairman has noted, FISMA is intended to improve Federal Government effectiveness when it comes to cybersecurity coordination across agencies. It also makes sure that we all get it right when we deal with Federal agencies, and we understand what those reporting processes are. My amendment would make one such improvement to provide clarity for critical infrastructure providers to report major incidents to the Federal Government when facing a cyberattack.

Mr. Chairman, I want you to know that in dealing with the airline industry, I received information as of late that gave them, when they reviewed this bill, the confidence that what Ms. Mace did and those cosponsors was a fine opportunity, but they felt like that they had already been provided such instruction by law. This amendment would change reporting obligations to refer to those found in the Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act, which passed the House in 2022.

This particular group of airlines, under what might be known as Airlines for America, believe that they already have been given specific information about the need and responsibility for them to report, and they believe that this current law regarding critical infrastructure entities has already been undertaken. And so, they believe this would create uncertainty and perhaps open up to them some questions about under which circumstances and under what conditions they would need to report to be under this language and new law. I think that what Ms. Mace and this legislation does is the right thing, but I simply believe that there should be some clarity related to this as it allows itself to be compared to this previous law, which was passed in 2022.

With that said, Mr. Chairman, I have talked with you about this, and I have talked to the gentlewoman, Ms. Mace. Ms. Mace felt very strongly that I should pursue this matter, but I want you to know that what I am going to do at this time is I am going to withdraw this amendment for consideration and recommend that the Committee consider this change to this bill, considered to be very deliberate and knowledgeable, and we work together. So, I have

now made my point. Ms. Mace was great to make her point to me, and we will let it move forward for consideration in the U.S. Senate. Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I want to thank the Chairman of the Government Operations Subcommittee. I, too, Mr. Sessions, am sensitive to the burdens and confusion that can accompany overreporting requirements. The Committee worked diligently to prevent the sort of duplicative efforts you described for Federal agencies and non-Federal entities with this bill, but our government also needs to know when a Federal system has been compromised. I really appreciate the gentleman from Texas offering and withdrawing his amendment and look forward to working with him as the bill moves through the process.

Do any other Members wish to seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. 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 reporting, H.R. 4552, 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, as amended.

For what purpose does gentleman from Texas seek recognition?

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Chair, may I ask for a recorded vote?

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

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 7523**, Governmentwide Executive Councils Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7523, Governmentwide Executive Councils Act, a bill to establish the Office of Executive Councils, and for other purposes.

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

Without objection, so ordered.

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. 7523, as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

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

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

This bill, the Governmentwide Executive Councils Reform Act, provides Congress with additional oversight of six existing governmentwide executive branch councils. These existing councils are important in developing and implementing governmentwide policy changes across practice areas, including financial management, information technology, data management, procurement, human resources management, and performance and transparency. The councils represent the leaders of agencies who are charged with implementing the type of governmentwide policy mandates and reforms that are a unique jurisdiction of the House Oversight Committee.

This bill makes consistent requirements for these six councils, ensuring that each council maintains a publicly accessible website, publishes a strategic plan, and provides technical assistance directly to Congress. This bill also provides statutory authorization, imposes transparency requirements on the existing Office of Executive Councils and the General Services Administration, which was established to provide administrative and technical support, meeting space, and staffing to these governmentwide councils. Last, this bill updates the leadership of each council to ensure that the council is led by the appropriate senior officer within the Office of Management and Budget. This bill establishes important new oversight and policy tools for our Committee.

I want to thank my colleagues, Representatives Timmons and Ro Khanna, for their bipartisan work on this bill. I urge my colleagues to support this good government bill. I now recognize Ranking Member Raskin for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I favor this bill which would establish the Office of Executive Councils within GSA. This office would provide assistance to several governmentwide policy-making entities, including the Chief Acquisition Officers Council, the Chief Financial Officers Council, the Chief Human Capital Officers Council, and the Performance Improvement Council. Each of these councils would be required to provide legislative policy, project funding, or shared services recommendations to OMB related to their own area of expertise. They would also serve as a primary advisory body to OMB on the development and execution of the Federal Government performance plans and priority goals and would be required to publish a strategic plan updated every 2 years. GSA would be tasked with providing support for the councils.

Although I support this legislation, I want to note that OMB has expressed some reservations about a similar bill that was considered last Congress. It is my hope that we can address those issues prior to the bill moving to the Floor. I commend my colleagues, Representatives Timmons and Khanna, for their hard work on this legislation, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Representative Timmons from South Carolina, for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to my colleague, Mr. Khanna, for joining me in introducing this legislation that will bring greater transparency and accountability on how Federal agencies are using taxpayer dollars to meet their perform-

ance goals and better serve communities in South Carolina and across the Nation.

The Governmentwide Executive Council's Reform Act is an important piece of legislation that provides Congress with additional oversight and accountability over executive councils, which define and carry out management priorities for all Federal agencies and improve the operations and performance of the Federal Government. In doing so, our bill codifies the Office of Executive Councils, OEC, which resides within the General Services Administration and consists of governmentwide policymaking entities, such as the Chief Data Officers Council, the Chief Financial Officers Council, and the Performance Improvement Council.

The bill defines the duties of the OEC and requires them to submit an annual report to Congress of costs, projects, services, or programs related to supporting the various councils. Importantly, this bill explicitly prohibits GSA from providing support resources to councils who have not received congressional authorization. In addition, this bill requires each of these councils to provide legislative, policy, and technical analysis to Congress upon request, and scopes how the councils interact with and inform the work of the Office of Management and Budget.

All this bill asks is that these six councils act harmoniously and be more transparent. This is commonsense, good government legislation that I urge all of my colleagues to support. With that, I would like to thank Chairman Comer for holding this markup and thank Representative Khanna for help carrying this bill. I urge all Members of this Committee to support it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Do any other Members seek recognition on the bill?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. 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. 7523, 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 reported as amended.

For what purpose does Representative Cloud seek recognition?

Mr. CLOUD. I ask for a recorded vote.

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

Moving on. Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 7532**, Federal AI Governance and Transparency Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7532, Federal AI Governance and Transparency Act, a bill to establish Federal AI system governance requirements, and for other purposes.

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

Without objection, so ordered.

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

The CLERK. Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 7532, 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.

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

By using artificial intelligence, Federal agencies can improve government processes and operations, save taxpayer dollars, and increase oversight and accountability. Agencies should be encouraged to use AI, when appropriate, to benefit everyday Americans. To ensure this is done responsibly, we must have the necessary safeguards in place to uphold American values and protect privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.

In recent years, Congress has passed an assortment of AI-related legislation. President Trump and President Biden have also both issued executive orders on the Federal Government's use of artificial intelligence. All of this recent policy has produced positive, but disjointed and sometimes contradictory, directives regarding how Federal agency AI systems should be managed. This has made it difficult for agencies to implement these policies and challenging for industries to adapt.

That is why I am excited to take up my bill, the Federal AI Governance and Transparency Act, which I have worked with the gentleman from Maryland, Ranking Member Raskin, as well as Representatives Mace, Ocasio-Cortez, Higgins, Connolly, Langworthy, and Khanna. This bipartisan legislation centrally codifies, consolidates, and streamlines existing policies and law and Federal agency use, while providing the clarity necessary to ensure responsible and transparent use of Federal AI systems. For instance, this legislation codifies widely recognized principles for the responsible use of AI, which were first established in 2020 by President Trump's executive order promoting the use of trustworthy artificial intelligence in the Federal Government.

This bill creates this transparency by requiring the public notice of Federal AI systems that are either high risk or interact with sensitive personal records covered by the Privacy Act. These public notices, called AI governance charters, must include basic information that the agency and public should know about—how these AI systems are used and how they were developed. For instance, information on testing and validation processes, descriptions of data assets impacted personal records, and downstream impacts on agency programs or determinations.

By centrally streamlining and consolidating existing Federal AI policy and establishing AI governance charters, this legislation pro-

vides safeguards for Federal AI systems. By implementing these commonsense policies now, this legislation establishes a strong baseline for transparency of future AI use in the Federal Government.

Again, I thank Ranking Member Raskin and Representatives Mace, Ocasio-Cortez, Higgins, Connolly, Langworthy, and Khanna for their work on this important issue. I urge my colleagues to support this timely and important piece of legislation, and I yield to Ranking Member Raskin for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like the telephone, the computer, and the internet, artificial intelligence is a revolutionary new technology sure to remake our society, our commerce, our government, and our lives. In Congress, we have to act to make sure that AI works to improve governmental services and not to undermine our constitutional rights, civil liberties, and values.

With these imperatives in mind, Chairman Comer and I introduced the H.R. 7531, the Federal Artificial Intelligence Governance and Transparency Act, along with a remarkable list of co-leads: my esteemed colleagues, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, who is representing Committee Democrats on the new Task Force on Artificial Intelligence in the House; Mr. Connolly is the Ranking Member of our cybersecurity subcommittee; and Mr. Khanna, who has also been a strong voice in the field. On the Republican side, the bill has the notable support of our distinguished colleagues, Ms. Mace, Mr. Higgins, and Mr. Langworthy. Not many bills or Oversight Committee priorities are capable of assembling a co-lead roster representing such a diverse group of distinguished Members.

President Biden took relevant action on this matter in his sweeping executive order of last October on the safe, secure, and trustworthy development and use of artificial intelligence. The Federal AI Governance and Transparency Act would now complement and supplement that order. While AI itself is complex, the goals of the bill are simple: to ensure that any Federal AI use promotes the fair, just, and impartial treatment of all and to create an oversight framework that will help Congress effectively meet the challenges of this powerful new technology over time.

The bill would make sure that Federal AI use is governed by a clear set of standards. Federal AI use should be verifiably accurate, ethical, reliable and effective, transparently and appropriately disclosed to the public, and consistent with the Constitution and all other applicable laws and policies, including those protecting freedom of speech, privacy, civil rights, civil liberties, and an open and transparent government. The Federal use of AI should be purposeful and performance driven and should not work to disproportionately benefit or harm certain individuals or entities. It should be not only safe and secure, but resilient when it comes to systematic vulnerabilities, adversarial manipulation, and other kinds of manipulation and exploitation. It should be informed by an explainable understanding of the purpose, operations risks, and outcomes of AI applications. It should be responsibly managed and overseen, including through engagement with affected communities, and it should be overseen through accountable and appropriate safeguards, with compliance, monitored, audited, and documented, and

with relevant agency personnel receiving the training they need for successful compliance.

To implement all these standards, the bill directs OMB to issue guidance, policies, and best practices related to AI. It also clarifies the responsibility of Federal agencies to assess and reduce risks, periodically test and evaluate procedures and controls, and conduct regular personnel training programs. The bill sets up new accountability mechanisms to provide Congress and the public with the information needed to ensure transparency and oversight. It would establish a notification process for individuals or entities affected by an agency determination that has been substantively and meaningfully influenced by artificial intelligence, and it requires agencies to ensure their existing appeals processes provide the opportunity for an alternative review independent of AI.

It also establishes a requirement for agencies to publish AI governance charters for high-risk AI systems in use by Federal agencies, applying stronger safeguards and ensuring more detailed information is available to both Congress and the public. Federal contractors and subcontractors would also be required to provide agencies with the information they need in order to comply.

As of September 1, 2023, Federal agencies reported more than 700 current and planned artificial intelligence uses, and that number will only escalate as AI continues to progress. By acting now, we can put in place a framework that responsibly addresses the public risks of these uses so we can best achieve their public benefits.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your historic partnership on this legislation. I urge all our colleagues to support the bill. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Higgins, for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad to speak in favor of H.R. 7532. Chairman Comer's Federal AI Governance and Transparency Act is before us in markup today. I am an original cosponsor of this legislation. There are many helpful aspects to this bill to protect Americans and place necessary guardrails on AI and government, but I would like to focus my comments on provisions that borrow from my bill, the Transparent Automated Governance Act.

I introduced the TAG Act late last year as a first step to set limits on government applications of artificial intelligence. The bill, as a whole, seeks to ensure Federal agencies notify individuals when they are interacting with or subject to decisions made using certain AI or other automated systems. Furthermore, the legislation directs agencies to establish a human review appeals process that will ensure there is a human review of AI-generated decisions that may negatively affect individuals. The Federal AI Governance and Transparency Act incorporates both notification and appeals requirements across government to protect Americans from unaccountable government actions by AI.

We cannot trust the government to use these powerful tools without increasingly adept accountability and transparency measures. This bill is a good start, it is a good beginning to address a complex

issue, and I commend Chairman Comer and my colleagues for leading on this issue. I yield, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Do any other Members wish to be heard?

[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 reporting H.R. 7532, 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 reported, as amended.

For what purpose does Representative Cloud seek recognition?

Mr. CLOUD. I ask for a recorded vote.

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

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 7528**, Comment Integrity and Management Act of 2024. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7528, the Comment Integrity and Management Act of 2024, a bill to improve the integrity and management of mass comments and computer-generated comments in the regulatory review process, 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.

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

The CLERK. Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 7528, 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.

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

Every American deserves the opportunity to participate in our political system, which includes sharing their views on agency rulemaking. Agencies are required to provide an opportunity to participate in rulemaking and submitting written views or data on draft rules. Recent advances have expanded the ability for the public to comment on proposed rules electronically. However, agencies may struggle to manage computer-generated or mass comments. This bill provides additional support to agencies navigating these new challenges by allowing them the flexibility necessary to manage electronic comments.

This bill requires agencies to verify that any comment submitted electronically has been submitted by an actual human. This bill also provides agencies with additional authorities to assist with its processing and analyzing of mass comments submitted electronically. These new authorities would require agencies to identify, to the extent practical, if the comment is a mass comment and indicate this identification on any publicly available copy of the comment. This bill also requires agencies to establish and make public any policies they have regarding how they will manage, post, or consider computer-generated and mass comments during the rule-making process. Further, this legislation requires the Office of Management and Budget to issue guidance to agencies and requires the GAO to submit a report to Congress on computer-generated comments.

It is time that our Federal agencies adapt their processes to accommodate the latest technologies. H.R. 7528 helps ensure every American is heard and not drowned out by an influx of computer-generated comments. I want to thank Representative Clay Higgins for his ideas and work in developing this necessary legislation. I encourage my colleagues to support this good government proposal, and I now recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Technological advances have expanded access to the Federal agencies' online rulemaking dockets, and they have made it a lot easier for the public to comment on proposed rules, and that is a great thing. At the same time, in some recent high-profile rulemakings, agencies have received a very high volume of duplicative and identical comments, which has created some challenges for agencies in processing comments and managing their online rulemaking dockets.

This bill is designed to help agencies manage mass comments and computer-generated comments submitted in response to proposed rules. It is not intended in any way to discourage or deter mass comments, which are a vital part of the regulatory process, and I would strongly oppose the legislation if that were its purpose or its effect. The bill would allow agencies to post a representative sample of mass comments, but if they choose to do that, they are also required in the legislation to post the precise number of identical comments received. The bill would also require agencies within 1 year to establish policies for handling computer-generated comments consistent with this legislation.

I want to thank Chairman Comer and staff for working with me to address some of the concerns that were raised about the original introduced version of the bill. I understand both the Administration and an outside coalition have raised some concerns about the legislation. Our staff has worked with them and our Majority counterparts to substantively incorporate their feedback into this revised version of the bill, and so, at least at this point, I feel satisfied. I hope that before the legislation moves any further, there would be a buy-in and a signoff from the Administration, and that the concerns of the outside coalition have been sufficiently addressed. Otherwise, I am pleased to support the bill, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Representative Higgins from Louisiana, for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. I thank the Chairman, and it is interesting to note the means by which this bill has been advanced with meaningful conversations between my office and the Committee staff, and the Ranking Member's concerns have been addressed. And I appreciate Ranking Member Raskin's very legitimate and sincere concerns regarding the language of the bill, and I stand committed to work through any remaining concerns that the Administration may have or outside groups may have.

This markup today and this bill, in particular, in my opinion, is an excellent example of how we may work together when we find common ground to address the needs and concerns of the people we are sworn to serve. So, I offer the Comment Integrity and Management Act, which is both timely and essential in the digital age we navigate, an age where our constituents engage with us more and more through electronic means. The bill I am presenting today seeks to safeguard the integrity of this engagement, particularly in the realm of agency rulemaking processes.

In our commitment to democratic principles, we acknowledge the right of every American to participate in our political system. This participation includes the invaluable process of submitting comments on proposed rules and regulations, comments that shape the very fabric of our governance. With the advent of digital technology, the channels for such participation have expanded, providing broader access but also introducing new challenges. Unfortunately, digital advancement has been accompanied by the rise of computer-generated comments, which can actually obscure genuine public input and hinder our agencies' ability to effectively gauge public sentiment.

It is against this backdrop that the Comment Integrity and Management Act has been conceived. The cornerstone of the bill is its commitment to ensuring that every comment submitted electronically comes from a real person, not an automated program. By requiring human verification, we are taking a significant step toward preserving the authenticity of public input. Furthermore, the Comment Integrity and Management Act equips our agencies with the flexibility and tools necessary to efficiently manage the comments they receive. This includes the authority to identify and process computer-generated and mass comments, ensuring that they are handled transparently and effectively.

Transparency is further bolstered by requiring agencies to establish and make public their policies on managing and considering electronic comments. This move not only enhances accountability, but also ensures our constituents understand exactly how their voices are heard. Additionally, the legislation directs the Office of Management and Budget to issue guidance to agencies on best practices for managing electronic comments, and mandates a report from the GAO on the prevalence and impact of computer-generated comments.

In offering the Comment Integrity and Management Act, I urge my colleagues to recognize the importance of adopting our processes to the realities of the 21st century. It is imperative that we ensure every American is heard and that genuine public input is not drowned out by the noise of automation. This bill represents a good government approach to embracing technological advance-

ments while safeguarding the principles of public participation and transparency in the rulemaking process. I thank my colleagues and urge support of this bill. Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Mr. RASKIN. Would the gentleman just yield for one question?

Mr. HIGGINS. I will gladly yield to my friend, the Ranking Member.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, my friend, Mr. Higgins. One of the reasons that this seems like a reasonable approach to the problem that you accurately describe is, I think about when I get computerized mail to my office, if 300 people sign the same letter or send me the same letter and it is verbatim identical, I do not read it 300 times. I would read it once, and then I would look to see how many people had signed on to it with their names. And I understand that the purpose of this legislation is to allow the agencies, if they have not 300, but 300,000 comments, identical comments, not to reprint each one, but to reprint one. If there are variations, reprint the several variations, and then have a list of the names and the number of people who signed it. Is that right? Am I understanding it correctly?

Mr. HIGGINS. There is a requirement to report variations on the same comment. There may be slight variations, essentially delivering the same message as a requirement to document those variations and to report the number of those variations that have been received, whereby an honest and transparent assessment of the full public commentary can be reported as part of that government endeavor. I believe it would be mostly helpful, quite frankly, on, you know, a more local and state level where particular projects are of particular concern to communities and densities of population, and government has an obligation to measure the support or the opposition of that project in a very real and sincere manner.

So, this is a legitimate effort to accurately document the commentary of the citizenry that we serve, but to further that accuracy by reporting the numbers of that comment that was received by automation or robotic correspondence.

Mr. RASKIN. And if I might, it is further consistent with the language and your intent with this legislation to say that if I am a citizen and I get a three-paragraph suggested comment to, say, send into the Food and Drug Agency or whatever, and I wanted to add a couple of paragraphs of my own describing my own family's experience or whatever, that one would have to be posted separately because at that point, it becomes distinctive.

Mr. HIGGINS. That is the purpose. Yes, sir.

Mr. RASKIN. OK.

Mr. HIGGINS. That would be considered a variant of a common message that has been received, so it would be required to be reported. Yes, sir.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. Thank you very kindly, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Do any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. 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. 7528, 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 reported.

For what purpose does Representative Cloud seek recognition?

Mr. CLOUD. I ask for a recorded vote.

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

The Committee will suspend for 5 minutes because we are waiting for the sponsor, Representative Biggs. He is en route and should be here. He may be here in 2 minutes, but we will suspend for a few minutes.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. The Committee will come back to order.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 7533**, Modernizing Retrospective Regulatory Review Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7533, the Modernizing Retrospective Regulatory Review Act, a bill to improve retrospective reviews of Federal regulations, 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.

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. 7533, 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.

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

As the regulatory state grows, Congress must ensure agencies also review existing regulations. Retrospective review helps agencies decide if the current regulations impacting the lives of Americans need to be revisited. Many agencies are already required to conduct such reviews. Technology, such as artificial intelligence, has the potential to make these reviews more efficient and cost-effective and can improve the accuracy of the final assessments.

The Modernizing Retrospective Regulatory Review Act requires the Office of Management and Budget to issue guidance on how agencies can use technology in their retrospective review process. The bill also requires the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to submit a report to Congress assessing whether existing Federal regulations are available in a machine-readable format.

This would ensure agencies are able to use new technology to complete retrospective reviews and follow a plan to do so. Under the bill, agencies must identify all regulations that require or would benefit from retrospective review. The Oversight Committee remains committed to reforming the Federal Government's regulatory functions.

I encourage my colleagues to support this targeted bill that increases efficiency within our Federal Government's regulatory review process. I want to thank Representative Biggs from Arizona for his work in developing this commonsense legislation. I now recognize Ranking Member Raskin for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hate to break our string of bipartisan victories today, but I cannot quite support this bill in its current form.

The bill would require the Administrator of OIRA at OMB to issue a report within 6 months on the progress of the Federal Government in making regulations available in a machine-readable format. That is a laudable goal. The bill would also require the Administrator to issue guidance within 1 year on how agencies can use technology to identify, through retrospective review of regulation, typographical errors and inaccurate cross-references. These are reasonable steps to help modernize the regulatory process and stamp out typos, which are the bane of my existence, so I like that. But the bill adds onerous new requirements for agencies to submit detailed plans for which regulations they plan to retrospectively review, and to implement those plans beginning 6 months after they are submitted. The bill also creates an open-ended authority, giving agency heads the discretion to review regulations when such review is not required by the appropriate statute. This could be a dangerous tool in the wrong hands and allow for more resources being used on reviewing rules than writing them, which I suspect might please the author of this bill.

I have a letter from the Coalition for Sensible Safeguards that addresses these issues in detail, and I ask unanimous consent to include that in the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. RASKIN. I might hope that these concerns could be resolved before the legislation moves to the Floor, but I do want to register these strong objections, and I am happy to yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the sponsor of the bill, Representative Biggs from Arizona, for 5 minutes.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Chairman Comer, and thank you, Ranking Member Raskin, for your input. This bill is intended to leverage technology to tackle problems associated with the sheer volume of regulatory text in the Code of Federal Regulations and the impact of regulatory accumulation.

According to Competitive Enterprise Institute, in 1960, the CFR, which is the home for all U.S. regulation, was comprised of nearly 23,000 pages. Yet by 2019, the total page count had grown to more than 185,000 pages. You can pick up your own print copy of the CFR from the Government Publishing Office. The 50 titles of Code span approximately 200 volumes and are revised quarterly. I will refrain from submitting the entire CFR into the record, but I have

plenty of other material to include today. The CFR is kept up to date by the Federal Register, which tracks the daily flow of regulatory action across the Federal Government.

Mr. Chairman, I submit for the record a December 2023 *Forbes* article, entitled, “Biden’s 2023 Federal Register Page Count is the Second Highest Ever.”

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. The article notes that the 2023 *Federal Register* finished with more than 90,000 pages of rules and regulations, up from nearly 80,000 pages in 2022, and only outpaced President Obama’s record of 95,894 pages in 2016. It was only outpaced by that. The final year of the Trump Administration saw around 86,000 pages, which was up from the previous 3 years of his administration. The article goes on to make the important point: page and rule counts are not a precise measure of the impact of regulation, but the sheer volume of regulations on the books presents its own set of challenges. And I will say—I am pointing it out—both parties have the same problem. It just keeps growing.

In 2014, the Administrative Conference of the U.S. put out a guidance document stating, “Traditionally, Federal regulatory policymaking has been a forward-looking enterprise. Congress delegates power to administrative agencies to respond to new challenges, and agencies devise rules designed to address those challenges. Over time, however, regulations may become outdated, and the cumulative burden of decades of regulations issued by numerous Federal agencies can both complicate agencies’ enforcement efforts and impose a substantial burden on regulated entities.” I will also submit that article for the record, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. Other scholars of the administrative state have estimated that regulatory accumulation alone, not the impact of any specific major rulemaking, but just the accumulation of regulation, has stunted economic growth between 0.8 and 1.5 percent annually, resulting in a potential loss of \$4 trillion in GDP from the 1980’s through 2012. And other studies point out that associated consumer price increases disproportionately impact lower-income households. I submit both of those studies for the record, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. That is why the Obama Administration touted the success of their own retrospective review program. In an August 2016 blog, Howard Shelanski, President Obama’s Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, argued that the 5-year program resulted in more than 800 review initiatives, removed more than 70 notable regulator provisions from the books, and achieved \$37 billion in savings, paperwork reductions, and other benefits for Americans. And I submit that blog, entitled, “Retrospective Review by the Numbers,” for the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. Providing regulators with new tools to strengthen the retrospective review process should be a bipartisan effort, and this bill requires the Office of Management and Budget to issue guidance to Federal agencies on how to leverage technology, like artificial intelligence, in the process of conducting ret-

respective reviews of regulation. The bill also requires the OIRA to submit a report to Congress assessing whether Federal regulations are available in a machine readout format, which is necessary to ensure that agencies can leverage technology. It also requires agencies to plan for and implement the use of technology to facilitate a retrospective review of regulations previously promulgated by each agency.

Specifically, the bill is focused on using AI tools to identify regulations that are obsolete, ineffective or insufficient, excessively burdensome or should be improved, contain typographic errors, contain inaccurate cross references or are redundant, contradict, or overlap with any regulations or standards of the agency. These areas of focus have tracked closely with the Obama Administration Retrospective Review Program discussed earlier. Section 6 EO 13563, issued in January 2011, required agencies to identify rules that may be outmoded, ineffective, inefficient, insufficient, or excessively burdensome.

I wish this was a totally bipartisan effort right now. I will try to look at Representative Raskin's suggestions, but the reality is, Mr. Chairman, I think this bill is appropriate as it stands, and, quite frankly, it does nothing more than actually reinforce an executive order of the Obama Administration that I think is actually long overdue and should be codified by us. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I urge everyone's support and yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Do any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. 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. 7533, 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, as amended.

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Chair?

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

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Chair, I ask for a recorded vote.

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

I ask unanimous consent to enter the following statement of support into the record: a statement from Net Choice in support of H.R. 7532, the Federal AI Governance and Transparency Act.'

Without objection, so ordered.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 7525**, Special District Grant Accessibility Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7525, the Special District Grant Accessibility Act, a bill to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to issue guidance to agencies requiring special districts to be recognized as local government for the purpose of Federal financial assistance determinations.

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

Without objection, so ordered.

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. 7525, 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.

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

Today, we have an opportunity to address an issue affecting Americans across the country. Many Americans receive essential services through special districts, units of local government authorized under state law to deliver specific services to communities. There are approximately 35,000 special districts across the country in every state. Some examples of special districts are ambulance service districts, drainage districts, emergency service boards, and flood control districts, just to name a few. These special districts provide critical services to mostly rural communities across the Nation.

OMB already recognizes special districts as units of local government similar to townships or villages, yet special districts often struggle to compete for or access Federal funding. The Special District Grant Accessibility Act works to solve this problem and ensures that special districts are on equal footing with other units of local government. This bill requires the Office of Management and Budget to issue guidance to Federal agencies emphasizing how special districts should be recognized as a unit of local government. This legislation is supported by the National Special Districts Coalition. I want to thank Representative Fallon for his work in developing this important bipartisan bill.

Before I yield to the Ranking Member, I want to ask unanimous consent to enter the following letter of support into the record: a letter from the National Special Districts Coalition in support of Representative Fallon's bill.

Without objection, so ordered.

Now I recognize Ranking Member Raskin for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you. H.R. 7525, the Special District Grant Accessibility Act, is a bipartisan measure that takes a positive step forward toward ensuring that Federal policy better reflects the complexities of local government and how it works. Congress confronted these complexities when we acted to send aid to local governments during the coronavirus pandemic. This in-

cluded Committee Democrats' work with the Biden-Harris Administration to provide \$350 billion in direct financial assistance to more than 30,000 governments across America, the vast majority of which were small local governments, and many of whom received significant Federal assistance for the first time. This bill would provide further clarity around special districts, a specific unit of local governments. According to the National Special Districts Coalition, there are roughly 35,000 of such special districts across America that play a big role in delivering essential governmental services, like wastewater treatment and fire protection, to millions of our people.

Special districts have reported challenges when trying to access Federal funding opportunities, and they have indicated that a unified Federal definition of "special district" would help clarify how entities can best assist local communities through Federal assistance programs. To address these concerns, H.R. 7525 would codify a definition of the term and direct OMB to clarify how Federal agencies can recognize special districts as units of local government for the purpose of being eligible for Federal grants and other kinds of assistance. Congress and the Federal Government must continually work to ensure Federal assistance programs are authorized, funded, and implemented to best address the needs of local communities. This should include careful consideration of the intricacies of local government and a rigorous commitment to ensuring Federal assistance promotes equal opportunity for everyone.

This bill was just introduced this week, so I intend to continue reviewing it to ensure it fully aligns with these priorities. But I appreciate Subcommittee Chairman, Pat Fallon, and Representative Brittany Pettersen for their excellent bipartisan work, and I plan to support this legislation today. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Representative Pat Fallon from Texas, for 5 minutes.

Mr. FALLON. Thank you, Chairman Comer, and thank you, Ranking Member Raskin, and I do not often say this, but, Ranking Member Raskin, you are dead on, spot on, and correct.

Mr. Chairman, the Special District Grant Accessibility Act represents a long-overdue bipartisan effort to ensure that special districts have the same access, as you all just mentioned, to Federal resources as other units of local government by establishing a formal definition of what a special district is in Federal law. Nationwide, there are over 35,000 special districts across the country, and, you know, it is something that is, again, long overdue and very timely.

In Texas, thousands of special districts provide a variety of services, including park maintenance, storm drainage management, water conservation, toll roads, hospitals, libraries, utilities, and fire control. In fact, I served on the Special Purpose District Committee when I was in the Texas House. The bottom line is special purpose districts provide important services to localities across the country. This bill would reemphasize that special districts are units of local government and are, therefore, eligible for Federal financial assistance.

I would like to thank my colleague from Colorado, Representative Pettersen, for working on this bill with me. It is a good bipartisan bill. The National Special Districts Coalition—they have been very helpful with their staff, and I urge all Members of this Committee to support the bill. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Do any other Members seek recognition to discuss the bill?

[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, say 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. 7525, 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. For what purpose does—

Ms. MACE. Mr. Chairman, can I request a recorded vote?

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote has been ordered by Ms. Mace. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

We will suspend for one moment.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. The Committee will reconvene.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 7530**, D.C. Criminal Reforms to Immediately Make Everyone Safer Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7530, the D.C. Criminal Reforms to Immediately Make Everyone Safer Act, a bill to make reforms to the D.C. Code regarding criminal sentencing, requiring a public website for juvenile crime data, 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.

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. 7530, 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.

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

I am very happy to support H.R. 7530, a bill providing common-sense reforms to the District of Columbia Criminal Code. This Committee has held three hearings with D.C. officials. I and others on this Committee have met privately with various D.C. officials to

discuss the crime crisis in our Nation's Capital. Throughout this week, one thing has been made very clear to us: the progressive policies of the D.C. Council are simply not working.

Last year, this Congress successfully blocked the D.C. Council's Revised Criminal Code Act of 2022 by passing the bipartisan House Joint Resolution 26, the first law which passed the 118th Congress. That was a great first step toward addressing rising crime in D.C., but that only kept the problem from getting much worse. The bill we are considering today expands upon that work. The D.C. CRIMES Act overturns targeted portions of the D.C. Council's Youth Rehabilitation Act by amending the definition of a "youth offender" from a person under the age of 25 to under the age of 18.

Let me emphasize D.C.'s current law. Currently, D.C. Code allows a criminal under the age of 25 to be given the same leniency as afforded to minors. This bill requires that we treat adult criminals as adults like the rest of the country. It also removes judicial discretion to sentence youth offenders under the minimum sentencing structures in place. Our capital cannot continue to let criminals freely roam the streets and expect this crime crisis to end. As juvenile crime soars in the District, the bill also requires the D.C. attorney general to create a publicly available website that tracks juvenile crime data. This data will inform Congress, the District's elected officials, the Metropolitan Police Department, the public, and others on the severity of juvenile crime in the city. Finally, the bill prohibits the D.C. Council from amending its sentencing and criminal liability laws, locking in place current D.C. criminal law and leaving Congress as the sole authority to amend such laws in the future.

The D.C. Council would have succeeded in implementing radical soft-on-crime policies if it were not for the bipartisan efforts of this Congress and this Committee to disapprove the legislation. Even Democratic Mayor Bowser vetoed that progressive criminal reform package, only for her veto to be overturned by the Council. This Committee is committed to its constitutional responsibility to oversee the District of Columbia. We cannot allow further pro-crime policies to be put in place while this crisis continues. Citizens of D.C. and visitors to our Nation's Capital deserve to feel safe. This bill is a great step toward ensuring our Capital City is safe.

I want to thank Representative Byron Donalds of Florida, the sponsor of this legislation. I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation. I now recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and we were having such a wonderful bipartisan morning up until now, but this is the seventh time now that we have been summoned to address Washington, D.C., when our oversight jurisdiction applies to the whole country. And I just wonder why, when we finally take a brief break from the GOP's impeachment investigation against Joe Biden for crimes still unnamed and unspecified, we have such an absurdly disproportionate focus on Washington, D.C., where less than one-third of 1 percent of Americans live.

Well, I thought about it. For obvious reasons, the Majority cannot talk about what used to be their favorite topic, which is how abortion is murder and how life begins at conception in all cases,

and any contraceptive interference by adults with life at conception, like IVF, should be a crime. This is a principle that more than 160 Republicans used to champion incessantly on this Committee and in the Judiciary Committee, and you can check out the Life at Conception Act, whose title pretty much tells you the whole thing.

Although this was always absurd and contrary to the values and beliefs of the vast majority of the American people, at least it was a principle, but after the Trump-named justices destroyed *Roe v. Wade*, expecting huge MAGA majorities to rise up and criminalize women's reproductive healthcare, MAGA and their leader, Donald Trump, learned a hard lesson. This is still a country that loves freedom and equality for women, and it does not want busybody theocrats and bureaucrats taking over the doctors' offices and bedrooms of the people of America. Voters from Kansas to Missouri to Ohio overwhelmingly rejected their sexist, Orwellian laws to control women and substitute Republican state legislators for doctors, for nurses, and for IVF specialists.

So, now they have gone silent on their one principle, which is making it a crime to use IVF or the morning after pill or abortion, even in the cases of rape or incest, the cat has suddenly got their tongue. They know America does not want reproductive healthcare in our country run by Jerry Falwell, Jr. and Ted Cruz.

Now they could try to get back to immigration—

Ms. LUNA. Representative Raskin, can you yield a minute?

Mr. RASKIN. I would be happy to, as soon as I finish, yes.

Ms. LUNA. Thank you.

Mr. RASKIN. But Donald Trump just gave the game away on that scam. The Democrats and Republicans in the Senate actually negotiated a major immigration and border compromise to hire thousands of new border agents, to install hundreds of fentanyl detectors, and to stop the flow of undocumented immigrants. GOP Senator Langford heralded it as an historic compromise, and GOP leader Mitch McConnell praised it. We were about to have an historic breakthrough instead of just talk, talk, talk, but Donald Trump promptly blew it up because he did not want an immigration and border solution. He wanted an immigration and border crisis. He wants scary-looking pictures and scapegoats to fuel his polarizing politics.

Destroying the bipartisan Senate compromise had the added benefit for Trump of pleasing the home office, former chief of the KGB, Vladimir Putin, who wanted to sink the \$60 billion in military aid in the Senate package for the people of Ukraine resisting Putin's filthy imperialist war on their democratic nation. But now Republicans cannot talk about immigration anymore, it exposes Trump's moral bankruptcy, which mirrors his approaching financial bankruptcy based on all of the court verdicts against him for his various torts. So, we are back to Washington, D.C. today, the city they obviously do not know and a community they do not participate in, with a government they just want to vilify. Do they really care more about the people of Washington than Mayor Bowser, and Council Chairman Mendelson and the rest of the City Council who sent us a letter explaining that the two bills we are going to hear today are just monkey wrenches thrown in to block all of the progress the District is currently making this week on the very

problems that they pretend to be interested in. Are our colleagues even aware that the Council just this week passed a 100-page-plus crime bill?

The distinguished gentleman from Florida, Mr. Donalds, has introduced a bill that would, “immediately make everyone safe,” which is a most impressive and Trumpian title and quite a magic trick for Mr. Donalds to perform, and one we all want to learn more about. But with his obvious powers of omniscience, clairvoyance, and omnipotence, why doesn’t he start first by immediately making everyone safe in Florida, where mass shooters are still free to purchase AR-15s and then open fire on innocent grownups and children, as one mass murderer did at the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas School in Parkland, permanently destroying 17 children and grievously wounding another 17, or as another mass murderer did at the Pulse nightclub massacre, where the murderer obliterated 49 human beings exercising nothing other than their right to live, and wounded 53 other people.

We know the gentleman from Florida, like his GOP colleagues, has strongly opposed creation of a universal, violent criminal background check favored by more than 90 percent of the American people and backed by the Major City Police Chiefs Association. We know they are strongly opposed to a ban on military-style assault weapons, like the AR-15, which is now the weapon of choice for mass murderers hyped up on great replacement theory from coast to coast, from Walmarts in El Paso, Texas; to synagogues in Pittsburgh; to churches in Charleston; to banks in Kentucky; to grocery stores in Buffalo. We know they oppose red flag laws to allow police and families to petition courts to remove firearms from people who are a danger to themselves in their communities. They oppose any commonsense, viable plan we have put forward.

So, what is the plan to immediately make everyone safe in Florida? Are they going to transfer the powers of precognition and telekinesis to school children who will now use magic to save themselves from a killer who decides one morning to go out and buy an AR-15 and slaughter a couple of classrooms of children? Are they going to arm the children and teachers, as they sometimes suggest? Are they going to tell them to pray to stop the shooters, a plan that apparently did not work out for the parishioners at the Mother Emmanuel Church, or the three students and three adults killed at the Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee? What is their plan?

Well, it looks like their plan is to ignore the brutal daily toll of gun violence in their own states and then instead lecture to and dictate to the disenfranchised 700,000 citizens of Washington, D.C., policies that they want to conjure up for them. And they forget the fact that D.C. has just completed its own comprehensive criminal law and justice assessment and revision. Its main features include increased penalties for illegal gun possession, an expanded definition of carjacking, expanded pretrial detention, establishment of drug free zones, increased penalties for retail theft, and increased collection of DNA from defendants.

I will defer to the infinitely patient delegate from the District of Columbia, Congresswoman Norton, to explain the absurdity of these substitute measures and how paradoxical it is that they ad-

vocate measures that are far more severe in Washington than they have in their own states. And we will pursue this hypocrisy simply because they insist on brandishing it before the whole country again. I will yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Representative Byron Donalds from Florida.

Mr. DONALDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no idea what the hell Mr. Raskin is even talking about, but that is OK. Look, the purpose of this bill is very, very simple, and the reason why it is important for Congress to actually speak to the conditions of crime in the District of Columbia is because a large portion of the District of Columbia's funding actually comes from Congress. The reason we do not talk about what is happening in the other states is because those other states have other jurisdictions that the Federal Government does not directly fund. We can go ad nauseam, but it really does not matter. I just would state that for the record, and now we can move on.

Look, we cannot ignore the facts that crime is out of control in the District of Columbia. We cannot ignore that. And if you were to ask any member of D.C. law enforcement, they would tell you that crime is out of control in a Nation's Capital. But it is not just the members of law enforcement. It is Members who serve in this very body. Representative Angie Craig, Democrat, Minnesota, she was assaulted in an elevator within her apartment building. Rand Paul, Senator, Kentucky, one of his staffers was stabbed while walking home from work. Henry Cuellar, Democrat, Texas, robbed and carjacked at gunpoint with a gun that was pointed to the congressman's head just blocks away from the United States Capitol. The United States Capitol, the District of Columbia, Washington D.C., is the seat of power in our Nation, and if people coming from all across the United States cannot walk the streets of the Nation's Capital to visit the Nation's Capital, and the citizens of the District of Columbia are being subject to massive amounts of crime, robbery, carjacking, et cetera, if the D.C. City Council is not going to act, but they want to ask us for money all the time because they are the district of the capital, then it is the responsibility of Congress to act. It is that simple.

Listen, if you were going to ask me do I want to sit here and try to help the District solve its carjacking problems or its robbery problems, I would tell you, no, but the problem has been ignored for far too long, and, yes, Congress does have a responsibility to act. Even the people in the room right now who are shaking their head know they have been to a CVS in the District of Columbia where everything is under glass, and you have to hit the customer service button just to get an eight-ounce tube of lotion. That is crazy, that is insanity, but that is what is happening in the District of Columbia. And you also have to acknowledge the fact that, yes, carjackings are up in the District of Columbia by juveniles. This is a fact. You cannot ignore that because you have your own political agenda. Those are the realities, so, yes, if the D.C. Council is not going to act, Congress does have a responsibility to act in the interests of the District of Columbia. That is what this bill does.

What this bill does, it brings common sense back to the criminal code in the District. There is no other jurisdiction in the United States where somebody who is the age of 21 is viewed as a juvenile. You are not a juvenile for voting, you are not a juvenile for buying a gun, you are not a juvenile for enlisting in the Army, you are not a juvenile when it comes to contracts, but in the District of Columbia, in the criminal code, you are viewed as a juvenile. That makes no sense. We have a responsibility to hold people accountable to the law, and what this bill does, H.R. 7530, it does that.

Look, I do not want to see anybody taken advantage of by the criminal justice system. I do not want to see that, but the criminal justice system does have to operate to protect the citizens of D.C. and the people who come to the Nation's Capital every single day, and so H.R. 7530 does that. The diatribe by the Ranking Member, I have no idea what the heck he is talking about. I do not because, actually, in Florida, our crime statistics are better than the District of Columbia. Those are the facts. So, the state of Florida is doing quite well. One of the reasons why is because our state attorneys actually prosecute, and we follow the law. We do not make excuses. We do not make excuses, so let us just call it what it is. That being said, Mr. Chairman, thank you for bringing up—

Mr. RASKIN. Would the gentleman yield for a couple questions?

Mr. DONALDS. No, Mr. Raskin, you have said far too much today. Thank you so much.

Mr. RASKIN. I am sure you think so.

Mr. DONALDS. So, I am going to yield back the balance of my time. Members, this is a good bill. We should be supporting this. We do have a responsibility to make sure that the District of Columbia is safe for its residents and for the people who come to the Nation's Capital. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Very good. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the delegate from Washington D.C., Congresswoman Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman, before I begin my statement, I ask unanimous consent to insert into the record a letter from D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser and D.C. Council Chair, Phil Mendelson, strongly opposing this bill.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. NORTON. I also ask unanimous consent to insert into the record a letter from 47 national and local organizations opposing H.R. 7530.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman, I strongly oppose this undemocratic and paternalistic bill. This is the ninth bill this Congress that House Republicans have marked up or brought directly to the Floor to repeal or amend statutes enacted by the duly elected Council of the District of Columbia. However, this bill is more extreme than the typical such bill because it would permanently prohibit the Council from enacting specific policies related to crime.

My Republican colleagues are correct that Congress has the constitutional authority to legislate on local D.C. matters, but their assertion that Congress has a constitutional duty to do so is simply wrong. Legislating on local D.C. matters is a choice. As the Supreme Court held in 1953, "There is no constitutional barrier to the

delegation by Congress to the District of Columbia of full legislative power.” 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 335 voting Members. The Members are elected by residents of their states. None are elected by D.C. residents. If D.C. residents do not like how the Members vote on local D.C. matters, they cannot vote them out of office. This is the antithesis of democracy.

The merits of the D.C. CRIMES Act should be irrelevant since there is never justification for Congress repealing or amending laws enacted by D.C. However, I do want to address one provision of this bill. Section 602(a) of the Home Rule act prohibits the D.C. Council from legislating on 10 matters, two of which are moot. This bill adds an 11th matter, saying the Council may not “enact any act, resolution, or rule to change any criminal liability sentence in effect on the date of the enactment of the D.C. CRIMES Act of 2024.” This provision is as poorly drafted as it is offensive.

The Revolutionary War was fought to give consent to the governed and to end taxation without representation, yet D.C. residents cannot consent to any action taken by Congress and yet pay full Federal taxes. Indeed, D.C. pays more Federal taxes per capita than any state and more total Federal taxes than 19 states. If House Republicans cared about democratic principles or D.C. residents, they would bring to the Floor my D.C. Statehood bill, which would give D.C. residents voting representation in Congress and full local self-government. 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., though violent crime is down this year. On Tuesday, the D.C. Council passed legislation that it believes will reduce crime. To suggest that a Member of Congress from Florida knows or cares more about public safety in D.C. than D.C.’s locally elected officials is surely patronizing. I urge Members to vote “no” on this bill and to keep their hands off of D.C.

Mr. RASKIN. Will the gentlelady yield?

Ms. NORTON. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very kindly. Just a couple of points in response to my friend from Florida. First of all, he may be blissfully unaware that a lower percentage of the District of Columbia’s funds come from the Federal Government than the average amount in a state. In fact, the people of D.C. pay \$19 billion a year in taxes, which is more per capita than all 50 states and more than 19 states in hard numbers. I do not know exactly where it stands with respect to Florida, so we can correct some of your errors as we go today.

Chairman COMER. Do any other Members seek recognition? The Chair recognizes Ms. Mace, or for what purpose does Ms. Mace seek recognition?

Ms. MACE. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

Chairman COMER. Will the Clerk please report the amendment?

The CLERK. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 7530, as offered by Ms. Mace of South Carolina.

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

I reserve a point of order.

The gentlelady from South Carolina, Ms. Mace, is recognized for 5 minutes to explain her amendment.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I first want to say that D.C. crime is completely out of control. This is a bill that I like, and I respect my friend representative Byron Donald's effort with this legislation and commend him for taking action to protect Americans here in our Nation's Capital. One of the things that I wanted to bring up, too, is that in working on criminal justice reform the last couple of years, that this bill, this amendment, I want to look at the discretion for judges to sentence youth offenders below statutory mandatory minimums. I believe that this bill goes too far.

And so, my amendment would strike the provision of this bill that would remove all judicial discretion in the sentencing of youth offenders and, in essence, impose mandatory minimums on youth offenders. Mandatory minimums are a one-size-fits-all solution to a judicial system rife with nuance. Circumstances matter, especially when sentencing children. We have to remember these are children that we are taking into account here. Every case is different, and if it were our children, we would all like to know that our child's specific case is being examined with all the details surrounding the crime and not falling victim to a one-size-fits-all arbitrary judgment, and so that is what this amendment addresses.

And I can tell you from firsthand experience in our own family, having seen mandatory minimum sentencing and what it does, especially to a first-time offender, it can have devastating consequences when those nuances are not included. And so, this provision would address that, and I hope we would be able to remove this provision in the amendment and allow for the circumstances of the crime to be taken into account, while also protecting residents and visitors to our Nation's Capital.

And then the last thing, and I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will support the amendment, but I did want to bring up the comments that were made about mass shootings. I have worked on this issue for a very long time. Mother Emanuel was mentioned. Mother Emanuel used to be in the 1st congressional District until 2022, and as a Republican who is seen the effects of mass gun violence in South Carolina, in my district specifically, that I have worked with both sides of the aisle on commonsense measures that, one, respect the Constitution and the rights of law-abiding citizens but also takes into account when we are doing background checks, that we are looking at all the criminal data.

And one of the things, Mr. Raskin, after Parkland, Florida, that I learned was that a lot of state agencies have criminal data, but they do not talk to one another. And when you are going to look for that background check, trying to find out if a bad guy should buy a gun, at the bare minimum, states should look at the totality of criminal information. Those systems should speak to each other, and, in fact, in 2018, I drafted a bill as a state lawmaker looking at the state of South Carolina in the aftermath of Dylann Roof and Mother Emanuel and the aftermath of Parkland, Florida, under-

standing how important this issue was to address and doing it in a nonpartisan way, and I have done the same thing on the Hill up here. I have worked with my colleagues across the aisle, for example, more recently on an Amber Alert kind of system when there is a mass shooting. There is no reason we should not give law enforcement the tools that they can use to inform residents, and these are all easy, low-hanging fruit that we can all agree on.

And I will tell you, there was a mass shooting on the island where I live with my children last year or the year before, and six people were shot. And my kids and I were leaving the house, and the shooting was a mile away from our house. And we are coming around the corner, leaving the island, seeing all the EMS, seeing all the police, seeing people fleeing the island, and police officers coming onto the island, including multiple ambulances. And the first thing my kids turned to me and asked, at the time when we realized there was a mass shooting, they said, "Hey, Mommy, where is the Amber Alert to tell us that we are within a mile of a mass shooting?"

And so, violent crime affects people all over the country, and it is something that I have been willing to work on with my colleagues across the aisle. I commend Byron Donalds for this bill, and obviously, I am open to working with Members of both parties to address gun violence, all sorts of violence, and how we can move our Nation forward and be safer in all of our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. Do any Members seek recognition? The Chair recognizes the Ranking Member.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank the very distinguished gentlelady from South Carolina for her thoughtful amendment and her remarks. I support her amendment strongly, which I think makes a dramatic improvement to a very flawed bill, and I will be supporting it and advocating for it.

I want to respond to a couple of things that my friend from South Carolina said. One, I am delighted to hear her acknowledge that mass shootings are a crime. Far too often, from her side of the aisle, I hear people denounce crime, but then when there is a massacre, a gun massacre, they say, oh, that is a tragedy, and we have to pray about it, as if there is nothing we can do about it, and surely there is something we can do about it. And it is not just a tragedy. It is also a crime. A tragedy is like "Romeo and Juliet" or "Hamlet," but a mass shooting is a crime, and if you want to be tough on crime, you got to be tough on mass shootings as well.

And that does mean a universal, violent criminal background check. I was delighted to hear the gentlelady's remarks. The Brady law, named after the late Republican aide to President Reagan, who was shot along with President Reagan, the Brady law has saved lots of lives in America. And what we are talking about with a universal violent criminal background check, supported by more than 95 percent of American people, is simply closing the loopholes so that you cannot just go online and purchase a gun without a background check. And we are talking about closing the private gun show loophole so you cannot evade the lawful gun dealers and just go to a private gun show and get a gun without a background check. So, we need to close those loopholes, and that is something

that is supported by major law enforcement associations and the vast majority of the American people. And that is something that would do a lot more to help the people of D.C. than any of the micromanagement that is being proposed by the now absent gentleman from Florida today.

I would like to say that there are a number of states which have the same youth offender law that the District of Columbia has, including Florida, and the gentleman is proposing to go to age 19 in that youth offender statute. This is for people charged as adults but treated specially under the youth offender law. He proposes to go to age 19 for the District of Columbia, but in Florida the age is 21. And again, I think that the gentleman, who, unfortunately is no longer with us right now, is unaware that his own state has legislation which he essentially just denounced as weak because it does not go all the way to age 19, which is what he is venturing for the people of Washington, D.C.

Well, all this got me to wondering what would happen if the people, who the gentleman seemed to be chafing at a little bit earlier when he was present, from Washington, who are here in the crowd to come and watch, got to sit in judgment on Florida's laws and he had to sit out there where the spectators were, and imagine what the people of Washington would say about Florida's laws. They would surely reverse Governor DeSantis' draconian ban on abortion after 6 weeks, a time when huge numbers of women do not even know they are pregnant in the first place, and that is what they have imposed in Florida. They would remove, undoubtedly DeSantis' absurd, Don't Say Gay law; his right-wing purges of state colleges and universities; his revisionist teaching that slavery, essentially, as a mass apprenticeship job skill building program; his abolition of the field of sociology in Florida; his numerous voter suppression laws; and his continuing efforts to disenfranchise former prisoners by making them pay a totally unconstitutional poll tax.

So, if we put the microscope on Florida rather than Washington, D.C., I am sure that the people of Washington, as well as a vast majority of people in America, would reject these laws that have imposed a whole regime of censorship and authoritarianism in that state. But it is not the disenfranchised people of Washington who get to legislate for Florida today. No, it is the absent Mr. Donalds, who gets to legislate for the people of Washington, which means demagoguing about crime issues without even understanding what the local government is doing, and without the promise of making any real policy progress on them. The irony, of course, is that while red states love to lecture blue states and cities about crime, the murder rate has long been much higher in red states where Republicans are in control than it is in blue states.

I ask unanimous consent to submit into the record a report from *Third Way*, titled, "The Two-Decade Red State Murder Problem," and I yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BIGGS. I object.

Mr. RASKIN. You object to that being entered into the record. On what grounds?

Mr. BIGGS. It has nothing to do with the argument at hand.

Chairman COMER. It is not entered into the record because of an objection.

Do any other Members seek recognition? Ms. Pressley is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you. I also just wanted to go on record and lend my support to the thoughtful amendment that was introduced, but I do believe that this bill needs to just be stricken in its entirety. This is nothing more than an attack on D.C. Statehood. This is not about true public safety, nor about advancing evidence-backed policies that actually help communities. Republicans need to keep their hands off of D.C. The residents of the District of Columbia elected the members of their council to determine what laws will govern their city, not the sponsor of this legislation, nor any Republican here today. My colleagues want to play games, games with the voting representation of hundreds of thousands of people in one of the blackest cities in our country. The District of Columbia has the right to self-govern under the Home Rule Act. Any changes made to the District's local laws, including policies impacting its criminal legal system, must be made by those who are accountable to D.C.: residents.

And I will just lift up one other point regarding some of the changes that Republicans want to make. They want to prevent experts in juvenile justice from having a voice in juvenile justice policies. And by silencing those experts, Republicans seek to keep using the failed approach that created the school-to-confinement pathway and, of course, locking up more black children. So, let us call this bill what it is. It is undemocratic. It is a racist attack that prevents the District of Columbia from reforming its criminal legal system. I urge my colleagues to vote "no" and join me in actually advancing real policies that affirm public safety and pursue a fair, equitable, and just legal system.

Mr. RASKIN. Would the—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Would my friend yield? Would my friend yield?

Ms. PRESSLEY. No. Oh, yes. OK.

[Laughter.]

Ms. PRESSLEY. Yes, to you any time, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you so much. I thought you were not going to yield because my Massachusetts accent has faded over the years. I just wanted to say, Mr. Chairman, and to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, you do not have to like what somebody wants to put in the record, but if we are going to go down the road of objecting to the exercise of free speech and free content. I just came from a Weaponization hearing where all the Republicans were talking about suppression and trying to go after, you know, views we do not like, and I come to this Committee, and the first thing I experience is the suppression of an article that a Member wants to insert in the record. And I just think I would urge my friend from Pennsylvania to think long and hard about that.

I do not think that is a good image for this Committee. I do not think any of us need to be afraid of any idea, however expressed. That is the whole point of having a Congress, and, you know, if we are going to actually start suppressing material, you know, in this Committee of all committees, I just think it is the road to perdition. I think it is starting a precedent that will create a tradition that

is unhealthy and damaging to the reputation of this Committee and its work. None of us have anything to fear from somebody entering something into the record, whether we like it or not, and it does not connote approval. It simply connotes you got that right to put that in the record, and it will be in the record.

I just wanted to say that, Mr. Chairman, because I think this is not about Democrat or Republican. This is about the functionality of this Committee and its integrity, and every single Member has a stake in the issue of suppression of freely written material that a Member may seek. I yield back to my friend from Massachusetts and thank her for yielding.

Mr. RASKIN. Will the gentlelady yield? I thank you, and I thank you, Mr. Connolly, for those very eloquent and incisive remarks. In a free society, based on freedom of expression, freedom of speech, public discourse, we depend on reading not just the views that reconfirm what we believe, and I know that some people believe in a closed media propaganda system that can train people on big lies and propaganda and disinformation, but in a free society, we are willing to hear views that we might think we absolutely abhor. Having said that, I might disagree a little bit with my friend from Virginia because I think that there is a reason that they want to not include this particular document in the record.

What I asked unanimous consent for was *Third Way's* report called, "The Two-Decade Red State Murder Problem," and it is all about how the red states have higher crime rates and higher murder rates because of their refusal to deal with the problem of gun violence and implement real gun safety regulation, the kind the vast majority of the American people want, like the universal violent criminal background check, like a ban on military style assault weapons, which have been used in massacres all over America, and like the red flag laws. Thank you, and I yield back to the gentlelady.

Chairman COMER. The time has expired. Do any other Members seek recognition? The Chair recognizes Mr. Perry from Pennsylvania to speak on the amendment to the bill.

Mr. PERRY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and like my good colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I am not really sure I am going to speak on the amendment, but they have set the precedent, and so my voice is going to be heard. And as long as we are talking about setting precedents, I will remind my good friend from Virginia about another Committee that we sit on together and have for a long time, where the Chairman, in the middle of my discussion, said I was out of order because he did not agree with the content of which I was speaking. And the Chairman just did that, not that I was submitting something for the record, that I was talking about something that was important to me in the Committee with the witness in front of me. And so, the precedent has already been set, not by me.

But I want to take the moment to remind everybody that took the oath, and that is everybody up here, if you look at your Constitution—they are readily available if you are unfamiliar—it is right here, Article I, Section 8, and I read: "to exercise exclusive legislation"—that is what is happening here—"legislation in all"—not some cases, not convenient cases—"in all cases whatsoever"—

in case you are not clear—"over such district"—the one we are talking about is the one we are sitting in—"such district, not exceeding 10 miles square." "In all cases whatsoever."

This is not a Republican thing, and it is not a Democrat thing. The United States capital belongs to all the citizens of the United States of America. And if they cannot come to their capital and feel safe—I will tell you, I have no interest in leaving these Capitol grounds for fear for my safety. I have no interest. I have got a family that I am responsible for, got two children that I want to see grow up, and I want them to have a father.

I know you are all smiling. It is awesome. There was a guy that was killed a couple of blocks from here getting gas that worked for the previous administration. A couple of blocks from here, they shot him in the head. It is not funny to his family. It is not funny to me. It is not funny to Americans that want to come to this city and engage their government, but they are afraid to walk down the street from the hotel to get to these buildings to do it, and if D.C. will not do something about it—Article I, Section 8, "to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever"—if you all will not do it, we will. I yield the balance.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, I have a unanimous consent request.

Chairman COMER. You asked unanimous consent for what?

Mr. CONNOLLY. I ask that an article by Kylie Murdock and Jim Kessler on the murder rate throughout the country be entered into the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank my friend.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Norton. For what purpose do you seek recognition?

Ms. NORTON. First, I want to speak to the gentlelady's amendment. No amendment can redeem this fatally flawed bill, but I support this amendment, which would preserve the authority of the court to waive mandatory minimums under the Youth Rehabilitation Act.

Perhaps my Republican colleagues are not familiar with the laws of their states, but many of them are about to vote for a bill that overturns a law that is like the laws in their states. The D.C. CRIMES Act amends D.C. Youth Rehabilitation Act, which allows judges to give alternative sentences to young adults and to seal their conviction records. My Republican colleagues on this Committee from Alabama, Florida, Michigan, New York, and South Carolina have laws in their states like D.C.'s Youth Rehabilitation Act.

The sponsor of this bill represents Florida. So, let us examine Florida's Youth Offender Act. Florida first enacted this law in 1978, 7 years before D.C. first enacted its law. Under Florida's law, a person cannot be sentenced to more than 6 years in prison. Under D.C.'s law, there is no limit on the prison term. Under both Florida's and D.C.'s laws, mandatory minimum sentences are waived, yet the D.C. CRIMES Act repeals the mandatory minimum waiver in D.C. Under existing D.C. law, the maximum eligibility age is 24. Under Florida's law, the maximum eligible age is 20. Yet the D.C.

CRIMES Act lowers the maximum eligible age in D.C. to 18. Lest you think D.C.'s maximum eligible age is an outlier, I would note that the maximum eligible age is higher in Michigan than in D.C. I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. Would the gentlelady yield?

Ms. NORTON. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you kindly. I just wanted to take the opportunity again to reemphasize my support for the gentlelady's amendment, and then also to answer something that the very distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania said. He read us Article I, Section 8, Clause 17 of the Constitution, which says that "Congress shall exercise exclusive legislation over the District that is to become the seat of government, not larger than 10 miles square in land yielded from various states." He did not mention the fact that the Congress of the United States delegated legislative power over local issues in 1973 in the D.C. Home Rule Charter to the District of Columbia Government, and that grant of power was upheld by the Supreme Court and has been repeatedly upheld in the Court, saying that it is perfectly constitutional to delegate legislative power to a local government, precisely because Congress has exclusive and plenary authority over the District.

Now, if the people of Washington want to get out from under potential political tyranny, as they certainly have every right and reason to do at this point, then we need to redraw and modify the boundaries of the District of Columbia, which has happened repeatedly in our history. Before the Civil War, in 1856, Congress redrew the boundaries of the District of Columbia to retrocede to Virginia, Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax County. That was actually at the behest of slaveholders who were properly afraid that Congress was about to abolish the slave traffic in the District of Columbia, and they wanted to make sure they could maintain both their enslaved human beings and their power to engage in the slave traffic.

In any event, it established the precedent that Congress, just exercising its exclusive plenary authority, can redraw the boundaries of the District. And so, it can do that today in order to redraw the boundaries pursuant to the D.C. Statehood Act that Ms. Norton has introduced, and then to admit the residential areas as the 51st state to the union. We started with 13 states. We have admitted 37 states, which means that three-quarters of the states were not part of the original union, although I will tell you proudly, Maryland was. But in any event, most states have not been, and the District of Washington, D.C., as we have said today, is an economically prosperous, politically self-governing jurisdiction that does not want people in these legislative drive-by hits to be micromanaging and finger painting all over their hard-negotiated local legislation.

And the irony is that just this week, the D.C. Council passed a revamp of its criminal justice policies, and yet we come barging in like a bull in a china shop, not even knowing that they did that, to try to impose somebody's pet agenda. I thank you, kindly, Ms. Norton. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mrs. Luna from Florida.

Mrs. LUNA. If I can just add in, Representative Raskin had cited the "Two-Decade Red State Murder Problem," and so after further looking at this document, I just would like to point out that I believe it is a little bit misleading with the statistics as it focused on blue cities in red states. And it even states in the article that they did remove some of the blue cities and still saw instances that occurred. But I do believe that this, based on the stats here, might not be entirely factually accurate and forthcoming, so I just wanted to put that on the record.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you. Will the gentlelady yield for one sec?

Mrs. LUNA. I would like to get to my bill, so no.

Mr. RASKIN. By all means.

Chairman COMER. Do any other Members? The Chair recognize Mr. Connolly to speak for 5 minutes on the amendment.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I support the amendment and certainly its intent. I do want to elaborate on comments made by the Ranking Member with respect to the constitutionality of the delegation of the authorities of Congress with respect to the management of the District of Columbia, and I would make a further distinction. Delegation is one thing. Circumscribing what we decide to do is another, and that is not a legal issue so much as it is a matter of judgment and political maturity. And, for example, you know, I ran one of the largest local governments in the United States. I did everything, right? We ran a bus fleet. We ran health clinics. We did all the zoning and planning. We did law enforcement and transportation. I would no more welcome this body intruding in my ability to manage complex problems where I know the on-the-ground situation and the rest of us do not, than anyone else in any local government, or, for that matter, state government.

And in this case, I think our friend from Pennsylvania all but said there was an unlimited ability by Congress to interfere when and where we choose. And even if one were to concede that power, exercising it is another matter, the prudence of it, and for that matter, the justification of it. And I do not want Congress in the business of doing zoning in the District of Columbia, and neither does Congress. So, we have, in fact, set some limits for when and where we are going to intrude, but at some point we have to, it seems to me, wrestle with the issue Ms. Pressley talked about in her remarks. Are we going to believe in self-government, starting in the Nation's Capital, or not?

And, you know, citing the founders writing the Constitution is disingenuous. D.C. did not exist when the Constitution was written. In fact, they had not even decided the location of the Capitol, and they had no way of knowing or envisioning a modern, urban, cosmopolitan center in its own right with its own local needs and the need for local governments. But I believe, undoubtedly, our founders would have said, had they understood what would eventually be planted here on the shores of the Potomac, was that, no, they have got to be entitled, like anyone else in America, to self-govern. They have the right to make the same mistakes, to experience the same human behavior—good, bad and ugly—as any other self-governing part of this country because they were committed to

those basic freedoms, and they understood there are risks with those freedoms.

The risk is we get it wrong. We make bad judgments. Well, that is called freedom. And when you decide, "no, I am going to interpose myself and prevent you from having, you know, good judgment and even the risk of sometimes bad judgment," that is the lack of freedom. And it seems to me that ought to be a principle on which both Democrats and Republicans can agree. This ought not to be a partisan issue, but we do need to let the District of Columbia free, let loose, and let the District of Columbia govern itself for its own internal affairs, as any other urban area, or, for that matter, rural area in this great country. It is time for that to happen. And as someone who spent a lot of time in local government, I fully sympathize with where the District of Columbia finds itself, and I believe that this body should resist the temptation to interfere. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Do any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. I will recognize myself now to speak on the amendment, but first, I feel compelled to address a comment the Ranking Member said. He mentioned the fact that D.C. passed a revamped criminal code. Let us not pretend ourselves. The reason that happened is because of the work of this Committee and the fact that our first bill, through the markup, House Joint Resolution 26, which rescinded their liberal soft-on-crime policies in Washington, D.C., actually passed the House of Representatives in a bipartisan manner, then it passed the Senate overwhelmingly, and then President Biden signed it into law.

Now, when we had the debate on that bill, if you will go back in time, the other side of the aisle, led by the Ranking Member, adamantly opposed the bill, but yet, the crime problem in D.C. was so bad, it was so obvious that their soft-on-crime policies were not helping the crime situation any in Washington and, moreover, they were making the situation worse because there was no accountability, there became overwhelmingly bipartisan support for the bill in a Congress that is not noted for a whole lot of bipartisan support. So, I wanted to mention that.

With respect to the overlying bill, I strongly support Representative Donalds' bill and commend him for that. I want to thank the gentlelady from South Carolina for her amendment, but I must oppose it. For far too long, we have seen judges in the District provide increasingly lenient sentences on criminals. This provision addresses this problem, keeping criminals off the streets and removing the ability of D.C. judges to continue their soft-on-crime sentencing. So, for those reasons, I sadly oppose the good lady's amendment, but I strongly support the bill.

Do any other Members seek recognition?

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Higgins from Louisiana.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman, having listened to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle discuss these bills for quite some time, let me say regarding the amendment, I oppose the amendment that

has been respectfully and thoughtfully presented by my colleague, Ms. Mace. But I oppose it, and in general, let me state regarding our compassion for our fellow man and our obligation to interact where we have jurisdictional authority to attempt to help our fellow man.

And as it relates to juveniles in the system, what we call them, once they have been arrested, there is a tendency to think of juveniles that have been arrested as children. You know, it is popular for politicians, the state, this is a child, should be treated as a child. We all love children. We have children. But it is providing no legitimate, compassionate, principled service to that young child of God to shield them from the responsibility of their own actions in life. Commonly, when an 18-year-old, a 19-year-old is arrested in America, there is a line that says his first offense, this young man, this is his first offense. It is his first offense of record, America, but very commonly, in law enforcement, you get to know the young men that have lost their way early in life because, in Louisiana, 10 years old, you can be arrested. So, 10 to 18, you might have arrested this young man 15, 20 times before he turns 18, and you do your best, man. You do your best. You put all your love and all your guidance and your focus into that young man when you are interacting with him, and you try to help him. He is coming from a difficult situation in his life, and to have a positive interaction with a solid role model can make a difference in his life.

And I have touched these lives and made differences, but you cannot remove the mechanisms of responsibility for juveniles that commit criminal acts in our judicial system and think that you are helping that young man. You are not. Listen, you have to save these young men before they are adults if they are on a criminal path, and you are not going to do it by reducing the given accountabilities for that young man if he commits a crime and gets arrested. You are going to actually injure this young man's life because his only path to freedom, real freedom, true freedom, spiritual freedom, freedom to live and grow and perform as a human being, to be a positive member of his society, to be a role model for his children yet to be born, the only path to that freedom, frequently, for a young man that has chosen a criminal life, that side of the game, is serious accountability in the juvenile criminal court system.

If you remove that, then you shall reap what you sow, and if you seek to actually help your young fellow man, this young American, that deserves a right at redemption. These are the bands I wear upon my wrist. I give a couple of them away every day. They say "redemption." I believe in redemption. I have said many times in my life, a man's character should not be measured by the way he falls, it should be measured by the way he stands back up. But we have a responsibility, my colleagues, to help that young man stand back up. And if you remove this accountability, crime is going up, guaranteed, and you will lose lives at the level of their soul. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your indulgence. I yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. Yes? What purpose do you seek recognition?

Ms. NORTON. I just want to make a correction. The Youth Rehabilitation Act applies only to people charged as adults.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is on the amendment offered by the gentlelady from South Carolina, Ms. Mace.

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 noes have it. For what purpose does—

Ms. MACE. Mr. Chairman, I request 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. 7526**, D.C. Consumer Vehicle Choice Protection Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7526, the D.C. Consumer Vehicle Choice Protection Act, a bill to repeal a rulemaking of the D.C. Department of Energy and Environment relating to adoption of California vehicle emission standards.

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

Without objection, so ordered.

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

The Clerk, please designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 7526, 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.

I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill.

At the end of last year, the D.C. Department of Energy and Environment noticed a final rulemaking aligning D.C. local regulations with California. This final rule mandates that the District auto dealers sell only zero-emission vehicles by 2035. This action is foolish for a number of reasons. First, it limits consumer choice at a time when vehicle costs are soaring, and every dollar counts when deciding on a new vehicle purchase. Second, EV charging infrastructure, especially in the District, lags behind what is necessary to accommodate this scale of EV use, despite massive Federal subsidies. EV owners face limited options for public charging compared to the fueling options available to internal combustion engine vehicles, and long wait times for EV chargers are burdensome to consumers.

Third, supply chain issues have created a massive strain on manufacturers. There are difficult and expensive bottlenecks for critical EV components and raw materials, for many of which China is the main supplier. In fact, automakers have had to scale back their commitments to rapidly expand electronic vehicle production. In 2021, Mercedes-Benz announced that it would shift its manufacturing to produce all EVs by 2030. Last month, Mercedes back-

tracked, claiming that it will now allow market conditions and consumer demand to “set the pace” for what portions of its production will be comprised of electric and internal combustion engine vehicles.

Forcing industry to produce and consumers to purchase expensive and unpopular products only further cripples an already struggling economy. That is why H.R. 7526 halts the District’s reckless rulemaking. It reverses this radical mandate and restores the previous standard, which is much less restrictive and more in line with consumer needs. By mandating what type of vehicle residents are able to purchase, the District’s regulation greatly limits consumer choice and reduces affordability for local residents of all backgrounds.

This Committee is charged with carrying out Congress’ constitutional responsibility to oversee D.C. Not everyone within the Beltway can afford brand new electric vehicles, which are 33 percent more expensive than the average non-luxury vehicle. I want to thank Representative Luna from Florida for her work on this important matter, and I urge my colleagues to support her timely legislation.

I now recognize the Ranking Member for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. So, what do democracy and clean air have in common? Both are basic human rights that Republicans now want to deny to 700,000 people in Washington, D.C. This is literally a pro-air pollution, anti-democracy bill. And the way that the Clean Air Act works, as I understand it, is that states and jurisdictions in the country can either accept, as a default, the Federal standard, or they can adopt the California Clean Car Act standard. That is up to the locality. It is up to the state. It is up to Nebraska, it is up to Rhode Island, it is up to California, it is up to Texas, it is up to the state, and it is up to Washington, D.C.

And D.C. said, in their legislative wisdom, representing their people, their values, their priority and the air they breathe, that they wanted to adopt the California approach. Now we have got a legislation saying that uniquely, selectively, the District of Columbia should be revoked and overridden in its power to decide which way it wants to go in terms of adoption of a Clean Air Act approach. It is not our decision. It is their decision.

I wonder if the very distinguished gentlelady and the author of the bill has been to a single meeting of the District of Columbia Council, knows who is the council member who represents the ward that we sit in in Washington, D.C., has been to an advisory neighborhood commission meeting, has participated in hearings on this in the D.C. Council. Believe me, I have not. I am busy trying to represent my own constituents and trying to deal with the problems of the country, so I have not gone, but I would never dare to override the local decisions made in their local government. And so where do we get off with the arrogance, just the royal urge to decree that they have made the wrong decision about this or anything else?

I do not know what the right decision is for D.C. about this. I mean, I have my suspicions because I believe in climate change. I believe that is real. I believe in science. My district includes the NIH and NOAA and FDA. I believe in science. I know that is a

radical idea around here for some people, but I believe in science, and apparently the people of Washington believe in science, and they believe in making this commitment. Whatever arguments you want to make about it, guess what? They have heard them before because I am sure there was opposition and I am sure there was support, and they argued it out, and they came down in this direction. My God, what gives us the sense of moral entitlement to make a judgment for 700,000 fellow taxable, draft-paying American citizens? I mean, that is some gall, I have got to say.

Contrary to the misleading title of this bill, consumers in D.C. will continue to have choices under Advanced Clean Cars II, even after model year 2035. It does not ban gas vehicles. Consumers will still be able to buy gas vehicles for many years. If that is what your true commitment is here, if your value in your state and your district is to allow people to buy gas vehicles, climate change be damned, fine, you can do it for your district, but even in D.C., you could do it for many years. Advanced Clean Cars II applies only to new vehicles, and the overwhelming majority of vehicles sold in the District of Columbia, as I am sure all the Members know from having attended their hearings, are used cars.

So, I would say let us not allow our diehard allegiance to Big Oil and Big Gas to overcome our respect for the democratic rights and self-determination of our fellow Americans. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the sponsor of this very good bill, Representative Luna from Florida.

Mrs. LUNA. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter the following documents into record: a bicameral letter to the EPA administrator, Michael Reagan, with concerns regarding California's waiver request for advanced clean cars; two, article from the *Washington Examiner*, entitled, "Shocking Study Makes the Case the EVs are Worse for the Environment Than Gas Cars;" an article from *Fox Business*, entitled, "Hertz Selling 20,000 EVs From Fleet to Reinvest Gas-Powered Vehicles;" and then finally, an article from *Business Insider*, entitled, "Mercedes-Benz Ditches Plan to Sell EVs by 2030."

Mr. RASKIN. I object until she resubmits it later following the precedent set, Mr. Chairman, by your colleagues.

Chairman COMER. Motion objected. The Chair recognizes Mrs. Luna for her statement on her very good bill.

Mrs. LUNA. I would like to specify, you know, there are some statements, 'where do I get the gall?' Well, although I have not been to the meetings, like you, Mr. Raskin, have also not been to the meetings, I can read, and I read a report. "Consumer Reports" actually stated that 62 percent of Black Americans have no interest in EVs, followed by 57 percent of Hispanic Americans do not want EVs, and that is, I remind you, the largest voting minority in the country are Hispanic Americans of Mexican descent, of which I am. I would also like to point out that, you know, what I am seeing is a lot of people in Washington who do not really work that hard making legislation that is impacting people that are working very, very hard to barely make ends meet because of inflation.

So, reiterating some of the points that Representative Comer had stated, Chairman Comer, on December 29, 2023, the District of Co-

lumbia Department of Energy and Environment noticed a final rulemaking decision that would implement California's electric vehicle mandate regulations in the District. This final rule will require all new vehicles purchased in D.C. to be electric or plug-in electric hybrids by 2035. This policy is not only out of touch, but it does little to benefit economic well-being of American families and national security of our country. I also want to point out the reason why I mentioned those demographics earlier is because, as stated earlier by my colleague across the aisle, Washington D.C. is a predominantly Black community. It is important to point out that D.C. lacks the proper infrastructure, as stated by Chairman Comer, to support this policy. In fact, D.C., Arlington, and Alexandria have a total of 5,069 public charging stations with more than 689,000 residents in just the District alone.

D.C. residents will not only be the ones impacted by this policy, but anyone who visits or works in the District will have to deal with the consequences of this out-of-touch push toward electric vehicles. It is clear that D.C. did not consider the economic well-being or really what the residents wanted before coming up with this policy decision. And I always really have an issue when people state that it is people that are interested in Big Gas and petroleum that are pushing for this, when I find that a lot of the EV subsidies are actually going toward large donors for the Democrat Party.

In 2022 alone, the average medium household income was only \$74,000. Roughly, in comparison, the average cost of an electric vehicle in July 2023 is over \$53,000. Given inflation and the current cost of living, American families cannot afford an electric vehicle when they are simply trying to make ends meet, as I stated earlier. Let us not also forget that the push for this kind of electric vehicle mandate actually benefits our foreign adversaries, particularly China, who makes over 80 percent of our world's electric batteries. When they are doing this manufacturing, it does contribute to air pollution. So, if you are going to do it, let us at least not help the place that is polluting the world the most.

And I would also like to note that my work on this topic, especially on the human rights issue, for lithium and cobalt mining to get those batteries, does not just stop here. I sit on Natural Resources, and I have cosponsored many pieces of legislation that actually stop that. In fact, we would like to take a moment to consider that in the Chinese lithium mines, specifically in the Western Qing Hai Province, and cobalt mines in the Democrat Republic of Congo, there are also child slave labor currently taking place. These mines, which supply the minerals needed for electric vehicles, use forced labor of children and slaves.

While this mandate discussed in this bill pertains to D.C., there is nothing stopping similar mandates from being implemented across the country if we do not put a stop to it, so I am doing exactly that. I am listening to people, not just here, but people across the country. Might I add that we have a very big problem, and I do think sometimes that certain technologies are hidden from the American people to promote what I would say is crony capitalism. But you guys are not going to find me advocating for something that is going to force people that are barely making ends meet cur-

rently to adopt something that is simply just not realistic. Thank you, Chairman. I yield my time.

Chairman COMER. Very good. The gentlelady yields back. Mr. Connolly, you seek recognition?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I just want to say I do not think it is a very good way to begin defending a bill you have introduced by smearing people who work in the District of Columbia or the National Capital Region as not working very hard. I do not know how one knows that. I have lived here 52 years, and what has always struck me is the work ethic is unhealthy not because we do not work too hard, but because people work too hard and do not often have a good balance in terms of life/work. That kind of—

Mrs. LUNA. I would like to apologize. That was not personally directed—

Mr. CONNOLLY. All right.

Mrs. LUNA [continuing]. But what I am stating is that a lot of people in Washington do not have the same hourly work pay that most people do outside. So, I would like to apologize.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I appreciate the gentlelady. Thank you. Thank you. I wanted to talk a little bit about following up on what the Ranking Member was talking about. You know, I spent 14 years of my life helping the region here come into compliance with the Clean Air Act, and one of the defects in the Clean Air Act amendments enforcement is that you are responsible for end pollution, irrespective of where it comes from. So, a lot of the air pollution here, I mean, almost all the air pollution we generate ourselves is car and diesel exhaust. We do not have a lot of manufacturing here, but we do have the migration of significant amounts of air pollution coming from the Ohio Valley, which we have no control over.

So, when D.C., when the District of Columbia or, for that matter, the Metropolitan Washington Region have to deal with the fact that we are declared a non-attainment area because we do not meet EPA standards, most of it is outside of our control. And so, we are forced to look at other mitigation measures that are in our control, right down to how many trees can we plant every year. It is that specific and, in a sense, desperate, because we do not have a lot of levers of influence on things that affect us, even though we are held responsible for it. And so, I believe the District of Columbia then looked at, well, where are tough standards that could help us get to attainment goals, and California is one of those sets of standards that gives more control to the District of Columbia, and, for that matter, Metropolitan Washington, over air quality standards.

So, I think that is a dynamic that is going on that I hope can be appreciated in the course of this conversation. I yield the balance of my time to the Ranking Member.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Connolly. I actually just have a question for you because, unlike you, I have not run a major local government, and your experience and expertise are unsurpassed in the field of local government. But my understanding of the Clean Air act is that it actually offers the municipality, or the local government jurisdiction, a choice. You can either go with the Federal

system or you can peg yourself to what California is doing, so that is an invitation that is made to the jurisdictions.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. The District of Columbia, in its wisdom, like Maryland, decided to go with the California clean cars approach, precisely because we are facing the exact issue that you identify: lots of air pollution, a lot of it not generated here but coming from other places, but we are not going to cry over spilt milk and point the finger. We are going to say, let us do what we can to lower the amount of air pollution. Am I reading it right?

Mr. CONNOLLY. I think the gentleman is right, and we got to add one more thing. You are required to come up with a plan of mitigation. So, if you are in non-attainment, that is to say, you do not attain the legal standards set by law through the EPA, you have got to come up with a plan to fix that. So, they are under pressure to have a plan, and that plan has to be very specific. It is not vague. I mean, as I said, it is even down to how many trees might we plant that would have this kind of offset for CO₂. So, they are under a lot of pressure to have a plan that is efficacious and that will, you know, pass muster with the EPA.

Mr. RASKIN. And if I could ask you one other question. I mean, the only real alternative is to join a movement to undermine or destroy the Clean Air Act and say, oh well, you know, there is too much regulation, but then we are going to see much dramatic increases in lung cancer and asthma and emphysema.

Mr. CONNOLLY. There are few acts of Congress that have saved as many lives as the Clean Air Act and the Clean Air Act amendments.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. First, I would like to note that 80 percent of electric vehicle charging happens at home. Mr. Chairman, before I begin my statement, I ask unanimous consent to insert into the record a letter from D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser and D.C. Council Chair, Philip Mendelson, strongly opposing this bill.

Mrs. LUNA. I object, unless I can, of course, get mine in, of which I would then happily not object.

Mr. RASKIN. And, Mr. Chairman, I would like to withdraw my opposition to Mrs. Luna's offer.

Mrs. LUNA. See, guys?

Mr. RASKIN. I just wanted people to understand—

Mrs. LUNA. We just come together on an agreement.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Chairman COMER. OK.

Mrs. LUNA. I will withdraw mine—

Chairman COMER. OK.

Mrs. LUNA [continuing]. If you will allow both to be in the record.

Mr. RASKIN. It's a deal.

Chairman COMER. So, what we are going to do, I am going to let Mrs. Luna re-offer. Do you remember the five letters that she read?

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, I remember them well.

Chairman COMER. Do you ask unanimous consent?

Mrs. LUNA. And I ask unanimous consent, yes.

[Laughter.]

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Chairman COMER. And on Ms. Norton's motion to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record, without objection, so ordered.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also ask unanimous consent to insert into the record a letter from 23 national environmental organizations opposing H.R. 7526, as well as a letter from 16 local organizations 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 on local D.C. matters this Committee has marked up or brought directly to the House Floor. While the other bills repeal or amend D.C. statutes, this bill repeals a D.C. regulation. For as much as Republicans meddle in the D.C. official code, it is extremely rare for them to meddle in D.C. municipal regulations. This bill represents a new low in meddling.

My Republican colleagues are correct that Congress has the constitutional authority to legislate on local D.C. matters, but their assertion that Congress has a constitutional duty to do so is wrong as a matter of constitutional law. The legislative history and merits of this bill should be irrelevant since there is never justification for Congress repealing or amending laws or regulations enacted by the District of Columbia. Nevertheless, I want to set the record straight.

After two public hearings, the D.C. Council unanimously passed the Clean Cars Act of 2008, and the Mayor signed it. The Clean Cars Act requires the Mayor to adopt California's vehicle emission standards. The D.C. Department of Energy and Environment held a public notice and comment period, including a public hearing on the regulation to carry out the Clean Cars Act. Upon the effective date of the regulation, D.C. joined 13 states, including two states represented by Republicans on this Committee, in adopting California's vehicle emission standards, known as Advanced Clean Cars II.

There is only one question before this Committee. Does it believe in democracy? The D.C. Council has 13 members. The members are elected by D.C. residents. If D.C. residents do not like how members vote, they can vote them out of office. This is called democracy. Congress has 535 voting Members. The members are elected by residents of their 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 Revolutionary War was fought to give consent to the governed and to end taxation without representation, yet D.C. residents cannot consent to any action taken by Congress and pay full Federal taxes. Indeed, D.C. pays more Federal taxes per capita than any state and more total Federal taxes than 19 states.

If House Republicans cared about democratic principles or D.C. residents, they would bring to the Floor my D.C. Statehood bill, which would give D.C. residents voting representation in Congress and full local self-government. Congress has the constitutional authority to admit the state of Washington, D.C. It simply lacks the will. I strongly urge Members to vote "no" on this bill and to keep their hands off D.C., including its regulations. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. 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 by saying no.

[Chorus of noes.]

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. 7526, 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.

Mrs. LUNA. Can I get 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. 7527**, Mail Traffic Deaths Reporting Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7527, the Mail Traffic Deaths Reporting Act, a bill to direct the United States Postal Service to issue regulations requiring Postal Service employees and contractors to report to the Postal Service traffic crashes involving vehicles carrying mail that result in injury or death, 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.

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. 7527, 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.

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

The House Oversight Committee is responsible for overseeing the U.S. Postal Service, an organization tasked with delivering mail across the Nation. Last year, the *Wall Street Journal* published an article alleging that the Postal Service contracted with low-cost trucking companies that did not follow highway safety regulation. They also reported that postal contractors have been involved in car crashes that have killed 79 people in the last 3 years. To conduct oversight of this important topic, Congress needs to be informed.

The Mail Traffic Deaths Reporting Act requires the Postal Service to report to Congress any traffic crashes that result in injury or death. Under the bill, Postal Service employees and contractors will have 3 days to report a traffic accident to the Postal Service. These reports will include, at a minimum, the date, time, location, nature of crash, information identifying the contractor, and number of injuries and fatalities. The Postal Service will maintain a comprehensive internal digital data base of this information. The Post-

al Service is also required to compile a publicly available report summarizing annual stats related to injuries and deaths from traffic accidents.

The Postal Service is tasked with the challenging job of providing fast, reliable mail service nationwide. While they do so, it is imperative that safety is also prioritized. As the Postal Service shifts from air to ground transportation under the Postmaster General's Delivering for America Plan, oversight of trucking contractors is especially important. I am proud to sponsor this bill with my Democratic colleague, Representative Connolly. I encourage all of my colleagues to support this commonsense bill that increases transparency into the Postal Service's safety record and prioritizes public safety throughout our Nation. I now recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to salute Mr. Connolly for his great leadership on mail transport safety at the Postal Service, and I am pleased to support this legislation advanced by him and by you, Mr. Chairman.

The *Wall Street Journal* recently reported that between 2021 and 2023, truck drivers contracted by the Postal Service were involved in 68 traffic accidents, with 79 fatalities while delivering the mail. The OIG found that the Postal Service failed to record all mail transport accidents, including those involving private contractors, in a central data base. As a result of these oversight deficiencies, the Postal Service did not have a complete understanding of the full scope of traffic accidents and the safety performance of its mail transport drivers or the patterns that might be discernible from keeping real data.

The Mail Traffic Deaths Reporting Act would establish reporting, tracking, and accountability measures among all mail transport drivers, including the 4,600 postal trucking contractors within the Service. This legislation would increase transparency and improve the Postal Service's visibility into the full scale of mail transport accidents and increase public safety. I urge my colleagues to support Mr. Connolly's bill, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Mr. Connolly from Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank you and the Ranking Member for your gracious remarks and for your commitment to saving lives. You both mentioned the *Wall Street Journal* article. I want to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a report from the Inspector General of the Postal Service confirming all aspects of that *Wall Street Journal* just issued last week.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the Chair, and I am so glad we can partner on a bipartisan basis and introduce the Mail Traffic Deaths Reporting Act, which would require USPS to collect, track, and report on serious crashes and fatalities involving vehicles transporting U.S. Postal mail.

The Chairman and I have met with families of truck crash victims. We have heard their painful stories, and we are committed to prevent tragedies involving mail transport. These families-

turned-advocates welcome this legislation, which is endorsed by the Truck Safety Coalition.

Let me tell a story. In June 2022, the Godine family was traveling to their home in Gillette, Wyoming. Traveling behind the family on I-25 as they passed Greeley, Colorado, was a freight truck carrying U.S. mail on a contract with the U.S. Postal Service. The truck's brakes were out of alignment. The truck was uninsured. The driver did not have a commercial driver's license. When that truck carrying U.S. Postal products slammed into the back of the Godine's family vehicle, in one instant, three generations of that family lost their lives, including a 3-month-old baby girl.

Safety concerns about the freight contract trucking practices of the Postal Service have been increasing ever since. Between 2020 and 2023, at least 79 people have been killed in crashes involving trucks contracted by the Postal Service. The true number could be even higher because just last year, if you can believe it, we learned the USPS does not even report serious crashes involving trucking contractors because they are not required to. That revelation raised further serious questions about safety oversight of Postal Service-contracted vehicles, including troubling allegations that the Postal Service is managing truck freight operations which do not adhere to commonsense safety standards.

The USPS, for example, set delivery schedules that require drivers to exceed hours—exceed hours—of service requirements and have selected carriers with extensive records of safety violations knowingly. Between December 2020 and December 2022, the Department of Transportation identified a frightening 466 Postal Service trucking contractors that had very high rates of violations related to driving hours. In 2021 and 2022, 39 percent of trucking companies that carried U.S. mail violated rules meant to prevent driver exhaustion and did so repeatedly. Between 2017 and 2022, one single trucking group with a USPS contract broke those rules 200 times.

When I asked the Postal Service for the number of deaths involved in contracted transport of mail, they said they did not have that information because they did not collect, monitor, or report such information, cold comfort to the families who have lost loved ones as a result. This approach to this information was clearly an out-of-sight/out-of-mind management technique. That was until May 2023 when I urged the Inspector General of the Postal Service to investigate the safety of freight contract trucking practices at USPS.

The USPS responded suddenly by establishing an ad hoc, centralized reporting mechanism for serious and deadly crashes involving their trucking contractors. As the USPS OIG stated in a report released just last Friday, that is a welcome step, but the Postal Service still does not have a single written policy requiring the tracking of trucking contractor accidents and fatalities. The OIG's No. 1 recommendation was that the Postal Service fix this serious safety oversight immediately, and that is what we are doing here today.

Our legislation, the Mail Traffic Death Reporting Act, codifies the No. 1 recommendation. To begin to improve USPS freight's safety, the Mail Traffic Death Reporting Act requires employees

and contractors to provide a detailed report to the Postal Service of any mail transport related to traffic crash that resulted in serious injury or death. This bill requires the Postal Service to maintain an internal data base of such reports and to publish an annual report summarizing information related to crash reports. Finally, the legislation requires USPS to take action against contractors who repeatedly fail to submit the required crash reports. It is our hope that by doing this today, we can create a virtuous feedback loop in which crash data enforces strict adherence to safety, compliance, best practices, and, Mr. Chairman, saves lives.

I want to thank you so much for your willingness to allow this bill to come up today, and, as an original cosponsor, Mr. Raskin, thank you for your support as well. I truly believe, once in a while, our Committee has a chance to save lives. Here is that opportunity. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Very good. The question is now in 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.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, could I ask for a recorded vote?

Chairman COMER. On the, yes, next one. That was the—

Mr. CONNOLLY. OK. Sorry.

Chairman COMER. The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 7527, 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. And Mr. Connolly requests a recorded vote, so a recorded vote is ordered. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is **H.R. 5301**, Eliminate Useless Reports Act of 2023. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 5301, Eliminate Useless Reports Act of 2023, a bill to require agencies to include a list of outdated or duplicative reporting requirements in annual budget justifications, and for other purposes.

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

Without objection, so ordered.

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. 5301, 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 purpose of further amendment.

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

Every year, Federal agencies are required by various laws to produce thousands of reports, with a single report costing tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars. While many reports help inform Congress and the public, some are outdated and duplicative. With nearly 100 agencies issuing annual reports as required under law, there is a great opportunity for cost savings and improving government efficiency by addressing outdated reports. Agencies are already required to compile lists of the reports they generate, but this information is not included in an agency's annual budget documents, which Congress scrutinizes on an annual basis.

The Eliminate the Useless Reports Act requires each agency to identify and reduce the frequency of duplicative or outdated reports in its regular budget justification documents. This bill provides a clear and comprehensive mechanism for the regular review of outdated or duplicative reports. This bill would increase government efficiency and save taxpayer dollars by eliminating unnecessary reports. I would like to thank Representatives Garcia and Grothman for their leadership on this issue and Budget Committee Chairman Arrington for his collaboration. I encourage my colleagues to support this bipartisan commonsense bill. I now recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank Mr. Garcia for this legislation. I am proud to support it.

We have to strike the balance right. On the one hand, if we had no reports, then we would not know whether or not our legislative enactments were actually translating. On the other hand, if we overload various agencies with reporting requirements, they spend all their time doing that, and they are not spending their time actually fulfilling their statutory duties. And so, I admire what Mr. Garcia has done here, which is to set up a procedure for agencies to request the elimination or modification of obsolete reporting requirements. And I do not know exactly how we are going to get a report back on how it is going, but I hope that we will see progress there, and maybe we could get a very short report on the increase in eliminations of reports and the reduction of onerous responsibilities on agencies.

I urge everybody to support this well-conceived legislation, and I yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes the chairman of the bill, Mr. Garcia, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you, Mr. Chair, also, of course, our Ranking Member, for your support. And this is a bipartisan bill, it is a commonsense bill, and I want to also thank my co-lead, Congressman Grothman, for all his work and support, who also happens to be the Subcommittee Chair of the Subcommittee that we both lead as part of the Oversight Committee. I want to thank our bipartisan Senate co-lead, Senator John Ossoff of Georgia and Senator James Langford of Oklahoma.

Now, our bill is very simple. We know that Congress requires Federal agencies to provide numerous reports on numerous topics, analysis, operations. These reports, of course, provide Congress with important information, and we could not do our jobs, especially on Oversight, without them. However, drafting reports often-times takes enormous resources and responsibilities. Our bill, es-

essentially, is a commonsense overhaul to the process to get rid of reports when they are no longer needed, thus saving civil servants time and really saving the government money. These reports required by Congress are oftentimes no longer needed because they may be outdated. The topic has moved on, or it could be duplicative. And so oftentimes, because we demand these reports, these reports continue to be produced year after year after year without any sort of assessment if the report is actually necessary.

Under our bill, every year, when an agency reports their budget, they would also send a summary of any congressional reports that they believe are outdated and/or duplicative, and they could recommend that we can sunset, modify, consolidate, or reduce the frequency of the report. So, at the end of the day, we still get to make a judgment on what reports are needed, but this is just a commonsense way of ensuring that our civil servants spend their time doing their jobs.

I will say that I served as Mayor of Long Beach, my city, for the last 8 years before I got to Congress, and this is exactly the type of measures that we would try to implement to make government run more efficient and, really, at the end of the day, ensure that our work force are actually able to focus on doing their actual jobs. Endless and endless reports really oftentimes waste time if they are not producing information that we, in Congress, need. This bill reduces paperwork, streamlines many processes, and makes the legislative process more organized.

To conclude, I just want to just say one brief example. We ask, for example, tons and tons of reports, oftentimes on very technical issues. There is one report here which I think is interesting. It is the "National Strategic Germ Plasm and Cultivar Collection Assessment and Utilization Plan: Technical Details, Analysis, and Approaches." And we produce this report, and some could say might it be outdated and perhaps we do not need it anymore, but there is no mechanism to actually stop this report from continuously being produced, and so a commonsense measure. Thank you for the bipartisan support, and I yield back. And I would also ask, Mr. Chair, when the time comes, if we can actually get this report, if we can get an actual public vote on it, that will be great. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none.

Mrs. LUNA. I am objecting.

Chairman COMER. Objecting to?

Mrs. LUNA. The next thing we are doing on postal.

Chairman COMER. OK. Yes, yes, we will get to that.

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.

Mr. GARCIA. A recorded—

Chairman COMER. This is not the one you want to record, I believe, on this. The next one is on the bill. That was on the nature of a substitute, OK?

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 5301, your bill, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed by saying no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of Chair, the ayes have it, but a recorded vote has been ordered by Mr. Garcia. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

So, I just want to clarify something. We do the postal votes when we vote on all the bills, and it is always the last one. So, I am going to make this announcement, but this is how we always do it. We are going to recess until votes conclude. We are going to come back in here. That plans to be around 2:45. We will vote on all the bills and Ms. Mace's amendment, and then the last vote will be on the postal bills, and if anyone objects, then that—

Mrs. LUNA. Will I have a couple minutes to kind of explain to everyone the nature of why I am objecting and why I think Representative Perry is going to object as well?

Chairman COMER. Yes, yes, because Mr. Higgins, I think, would like to speak on the bills, too, but if one person objects, then it is over.

Mrs. LUNA. So, 5 minutes?

Chairman COMER. It is over. It is over, yes.

Mrs. LUNA. OK.

Chairman COMER. All right. Pursuant to the previous order, the Chair declares the Committee in recess, subject to the call of the Chair. We plan to reconvene after votes or 2:45.

The Committee stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman COMER. The Committee will reconvene.

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 4552, as amended. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 4552.

[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—

Chairman COMER. OK. Mr. Frost. Can we open up or let him vote by voice? OK. We may have had a couple of issues. Can we reopen it? You want to try it again or what?

The CLERK. Sir, you cannot reopen it to allow people to vote. It is closed.

Chairman COMER. You cannot—

The CLERK. You have to recreate a whole new vote.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, point of inquiry. Just for the future, if they arrive late, can we take their vote by voice at that point?
Chairman COMER. Yes, we can.

Mr. RASKIN. Could Mr. Frost and Mr. Cloud be recorded by voice now?

Chairman COMER. Is there any objection to letting that happen? Does anyone on either side object? I think there were three that walked in.

Mr. FALLON. Mr. Chairman, point of order. I do not have an objection. Pat.

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mr. FALLON. Is that just this one time, or are we going to do this every single—

Chairman COMER. Yes, that is a very good point.

Mr. FALLON. If it is just this one time, no objection, but it is time to be an adult. And we are here, let us vote.

Chairman COMER. All right. We will do it one time and allow the ones that walked in late voice. It does not affect the outcome of the vote anyway, but how is Mr. Frost recorded?

The CLERK. Mr. Frost is not yet recorded.

Mr. FROST. This adult votes yea.

[Laughter.]

The CLERK. Mr. Frost votes aye.

Chairman COMER. Is Mr. Perry recorded?

The CLERK. Mr. Perry is not recorded.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Perry votes no.

The CLERK. Mr. Perry votes no.

Chairman COMER. And is Mr. Palmer recorded? You are? OK.

Mr. RASKIN. And I think Mr. Cloud—

Chairman COMER. Oh, Mr. Cloud. Yes, Mr. Cloud.

The CLERK. Mr. Cloud is not yet recorded.

Mr. CLOUD. No.

The CLERK. Mr. Cloud votes no.

Chairman COMER. Does any other Member wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the Clerk will tally the vote.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 32. The nays are 7.

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

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

Now, we are going to do this from here on out with the electronic device, and I will make sure that everyone is recorded that wants to be recorded.

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 7523. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 7523.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded? No?

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Now all Members have been recorded. 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 40. The nays are 0.

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

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

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 7532. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 7532.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. OK. Have all Members recorded their vote 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 36. The nays are 3.

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. 7528. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 7528.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded? No? Yes. All right.

Does any Member wish to change their vote? 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 31. The nays are 9.

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it. 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. 7533. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 7533.

[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 question is on favorably reporting H.R. 7525. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 7525.

[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 38. The nays are 2.

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. 7530, the D.C. Criminal Reforms to Immediately Make Everyone Safer Act.

The question is now on the previously postponed amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute, offered by the gentlelady from South Carolina, Ms. Mace. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on the amendment to the amendment of H.R. 7530.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members voted?

[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 19, with one Member voting "present."

Chairman COMER. The ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 7530, 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. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 7530 is agreed to.

Mr. RASKIN. I ask for a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. OK. You withdraw your—

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Chairman COMER. OK. The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 7530, as amended. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 7530.

[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, as amended.

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

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 7526. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 7526.

[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 question now is on favorably reporting H.R. 7527. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 7527.

[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 40. The nays are zero.

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. 5301. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 5301.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Does any Member wish to be recorded who has not been recorded? Everybody good?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Does anyone wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The Clerk will now close the vote and report the vote total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 40. The nays are zero.

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 will now call up the following postal naming bills, which were distributed in advance on this markup: H.R.s 1555, 3354, 5867, 7180, 7199, 7385, 7423, and 7417.

Without objection, the bills are considered read.

Chairman COMER. If any Member would like to speak on any of the measures—

Mr. DONALDS. Object.

Chairman COMER [continuing]. They may do so now. Mr. Higgins?

Mrs. LUNA. After Higgins speaks, then we—

Chairman COMER. Yes. Right. And then Mr. Higgins, and then Mr. Perry and Mrs. Luna and Mr. Raskin. The Chair recognizes Mr. Higgins to speak.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I speak in support of H.R. 7423. This bill honors the memory of Luke Letlow. Many of my colleagues may remember Luke worked very closely with our former colleague, Dr. Ralph Abraham. Luke was a gentleman of distinguished accomplishment, a devoted public servant, and a true son of Louisiana. By designating the post office in Rayville, Louisiana as the Luke Letlow Post Office Building, we pay respectful honor to Luke's journey in life, which was one of dedication, service, and an unwavering commitment to the people of Louisiana's 5th congressional District.

Luke was tragically taken from us before he could serve in the House after his election, but before he could be sworn in. His legacy endures through the impactful work he accomplished through his family and the lives he touched. It is a testament to the strength and resilience of his family that his wife, Congresswoman Julia Letlow, now serves the very constituents Luke was elected to represent. Her presence in Congress is a daily reminder of Luke's vision and dedication to public service. By naming the post office in Rayville after Luke, we not only honor his memory and contributions, but also reaffirm our commitment to the values he stood for: community, service, God, and family.

I urge my colleagues to support 7423 and ensure Luke Letlow's legacy is appropriately honored and remembered for generations to come. Let us pay tribute to a life well lived and a mission carried forward by those he loved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield.

Chairman COMER. Mrs. Luna?

Mrs. LUNA. Perry—I will go first.

Chairman COMER. OK. The Chair recognizes Mrs. Luna.

Mrs. LUNA. It brings me no joy to object to this en bloc of post office naming measures, and it seems like, you know, even in today's day and age, this might be the only thing that we could do, but I stand corrected. I have been trying for the last year or so to name a post office after Ryan Christian Knauss, who was one of the 13 killed in Afghanistan. He actually lived growing up in Representative Burchett's district, and his mother is from my district. And what I can tell you is I am being met with fierce opposition from one Member, specifically, Debbie Wasserman Schultz out of Florida, who not just tried to block my bill, but also tried to block Representative Franklin's bill. So, if we cannot get a post office named because of whatever personal differences there are.

You know, she said that it is either because I did not say “hi” to her at a picnic, in which I did not see her, which is completely absurd and stupid, in my opinion. Or whether the fact that she thinks that it is somehow going to make Biden look bad, which is also stupid because it is not about that. It is about honoring Ryan’s service. It is about honoring Ryan, who was an amazing servicemember. I am not going to play those games, so if you guys want to do that, that is on you. And again, it does not bring me joy to do this, but I am going to object to this, and until that gets resolved, there will be no post office namings in the House of Representatives.

Chairman COMER. I guess we have to go to Mr. Raskin, and then we will go to Mr. Perry.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me just start by making a practical point about how this process works, OK? The postal namings all follow a very specific process. All the bills follow the same format. It is an act to designate a facility located at X address in X-town after Lauren Boebert or whomever. And once that is done—the Committee will not consider post office namings for living persons under our rules, or for non-citizens, except for military servicemembers or veterans. And now here is the key part: you get the delegation of your state behind you.

Now, traditionally, there has been deference in the state, I think, because, obviously, you can have mutually assured destruction where no Democrat ever gets a post office naming and no Republican ever gets a post office naming. I know one of the ones on this list is for Madeleine Albright. I know Jennifer Wexton, our colleague who is suffering from a terrible degenerative disease, has introduced a postal renaming for Madeleine Albright. She has gotten all six Democrats in Virginia, all five Republicans in Virginia, to unanimously get behind it. I think that all of the bills, Mr. Chairman, that are on this particular package that you have advanced have the consent of everybody in their delegation. I assume that is true with Mr. Higgins in Louisiana, he has been able to get both Republicans and Democrats behind it.

I am sorry to hear about your situation in Florida. I know Ms. Wasserman Schultz. This is the very first time I am hearing of it. I am very happy to go and talk to her with you, Mrs. Luna, but I do not think that we should escalate the fight to the full House of Representatives at this point. I think that—really, I mean this sincerely. I will go with you to her to talk to her about the situation. It sounds like you have got a wonderful, you know, potential postal designee, but I would hate to see all these other post offices held up.

Mrs. LUNA. Would you yield for—

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, by all means.

Mrs. LUNA. So, I actually tried to get help, and I got help from Representative Moskowitz, Lois Frankel, and Soto, and they still even agree, and you can talk to them, but they think that this is absurd and stupid, and it is immature. You know, you are a male, and I hate to say this, but I have seen this happen before with women. And I hate to say it, but there is zero excuse or reasoning for this to be happening in the House of Representatives or reasoning for why she would not want to do this. I have personally

reached out to try to approach her, and the fact is that I am not going to bend on this. I have the family in my district and, frankly, unfortunately, it is going to escalate to the entire House of Representatives.

Mr. RASKIN. Well, if the gentlelady allows me just to respond to that. You remember a little bit earlier today, I moved to introduce a document by unanimous consent, and one of our colleagues objected to it, which is something I had never seen happen before. We waited a little while, tempers cooled, he accepted it, and in the meantime, I had objected to yours simply to show people that it will shut down business, and what you are suggesting now will shut down business. I am sure I could get some of my other colleagues on this side to go and talk to Ms. Wasserman Schultz, but it interferes with people like Mr. Higgins, like Ms. Wexton, who have jumped through every hoop in order to make this happen, and——

Mrs. LUNA. I would be comfortable considering that after you guys confirm that she is on my post office, but until that happens, I am not doing this because what it does is it allows for the unfair targeting, for whatever personal differences exist, to be taken out on the Member. But aside from that, this individual was killed. It was a servicemember who has a family, and it is wrong that this should be the one point that this person is trying to use ego, for whatever reason it is. I would appreciate your support and help on it, but, again, I am not going to rescind my objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Can you just explain to me, you made it a gender point a moment ago, and I did not quite follow the argument there.

Mrs. LUNA. Because in talking with other colleagues, to include Democrat colleagues, the way that this has unfolded is it feels that there is a woman in a position of power and authority who has been there a lot longer—I am a new Member—and she is bullying me. She is bullying me as a young female Member, and I know that sounds weird to say, but it is not uncommon to happen in the workplace. Whether it is in normal jobs or whether it is in the House of Representatives, what she is doing is wrong. Like, it does not make me feel good to say that, but that is what is happening, and, frankly, I would urge you to talk to your other colleagues——

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman——

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. RASKIN. I just wanted to ask a question, Mr. Chairman. If we do not vote on this package today, when is our next available time to get these post office bills passed and on the Floor?

Chairman COMER. To answer your question, we usually have a markup roughly every month, every 6 weeks. This is a very prolific bill-passing Committee. Most bills that we pass are bipartisan. I have to throw that in there. So, this bill, it appears there are going to be two objections, so the postal bills, they will not happen today. Hopefully, you can work with Mrs. Luna in meeting with Ms. Wasserman Schultz, and maybe we can hopefully get this resolved at our next markup, but we will attempt to have postal naming bills again at the next markup.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. So, but procedurally, where do we stand now? In other words, her objection stops the whole——

Chairman COMER. I have not made the motion for unanimous consent yet.

Mr. RASKIN. I see.

Chairman COMER. When I do that, if she or Mr. Perry object, then the bill is dead.

Mr. RASKIN. I see.

Chairman COMER. And we will return—

Mr. RASKIN. There is another objection coming?

Chairman COMER. Mm-hmm.

Mr. RASKIN. I did not realize. OK. All right. I will yield back. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. I will go to Mr. Perry, then Mr. Mfume. Mr. Perry and then Mr. Mfume.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to be clear, I am not objecting to all of these post office naming bills. I am actually a cosponsor of at least one of the bills, Edwin Drake, the first American to successfully drill for oil. I am objecting to one, the bill naming a post office after former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright.

Now, in my opinion, during her tenures at both the United Nations and the State Department, she advocated for unscientific, illogical climate policies on both the world stage and in the State Department, setting the stage for the Obama-and Biden-era policies today that are championing and steering our foreign policy, which is dangerous, to say the least. But these policies are actually already changing our way of life here at home, from the cars and trucks that we drive, the appliances in our home, and the stability of our electric grid, all in some vain hope of reaching the emission standard championed by Secretary Albright and others during the Kyoto Protocol negotiations, which most Americans object to. She also pressured the U.N. to withdraw peacekeepers from Rwanda and ignored the warnings from the State Department and CIA about security risks to embassies in Africa, which were later attacked.

Now, folks on the other side of the aisle may disagree with my interpretation of her career, and that is fine. I respect that. That is why I wanted to separate this single bill out of the en bloc and vote separately on it. They could vote for it. I can vote against it. We can all register our opinions and move on, but we were told that that would not be possible, so, unfortunately, I will be objecting to the entire en bloc. And, Mr. Chairman, I hope in the future, if we are indeed unable to strip out individual bills from en bloc packages, you allow Members of the Committee time to weigh in on measures before putting them into one entire package. So, I do intend to object, and I yield the balance.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. Well, he yielded back. I recognize, Mr. Mfume.

Mr. RASKIN. Got you.

Mr. MFUME. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not admire the position you are in, and if the Ranking Member were in that position, I would not admire it either. I mean, there is a certain way that this House has operated since the beginning of the House, and this notion of congressional courtesy or the expectation that on certain matters, such as a postal naming, regardless of how I feel or

someone else feels, once you jump through all of the hoops, and there are many to jump through, as Mr. Raskin mentioned, the courtesy is that due diligence has been done, and we, by acclamation, go along with the recommendations.

You know, I have done that with a number of individuals who are Republican, who I may or may not have gotten along with, and many on that side have done it in terms of Democrats. If we break that tradition, we are creating a fire that is only going to escalate. So that, the next time around, I am objecting for the sake of objecting because I did not like the objection that came about today, it is tit for tat. And it concerns me, and it should concern all of us, that if we do not have basic operational standards that have served this body so long through so many Congresses and so many administrations, then we are headed for ruin in many respects because we will not get anything done, even the most simple things such as this.

So, it is disturbing to me, and I hope that in some sort of way it will be disturbing to all of us, particularly in this case, as it affects Representative Letlow and the gentleman from Louisiana's effort to try to make sure that her late husband, our former colleague, is recognized. I would yield to the gentleman from Maryland if I have any time left.

Mr. RASKIN. Well, I want to thank the distinguished gentleman from Baltimore for those really trenchant remarks. I want to say about this situation that I can understand Mrs. Luna's situation a little bit better because what she is encountering, according to her telling—I know nothing else about it—but what she is encountering is a failure of courtesy or deference within the delegation. And so, she is escalating it to register, kind of, her displeasure here at the Committee level, and I am hoping we can work that out as quickly as possible.

Mr. Perry, the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania, takes us into a completely bold new world, because now, although the entire state of Virginia, five Republicans and six Democrats, has unanimously endorsed the post office that our beloved colleague, Ms. Wexton, wants to designate after Secretary of State Albright, he has a substantive objection, basically saying he would not have nominated Madeleine Albright for his post office. Well, that is fine. He does not have to, but the moment that we start treating a post office naming like a Supreme Court nomination, where everybody is going to review each one on the merits, then we are really in the quicksand, as my colleague from Baltimore says here.

I mean, somebody else might want to say, well, you do not like Madeleine Albright. I do not like Henry Kissinger when you want to name it after Henry Kissinger. For some people, Henry Kissinger might be like Otto von Bismarck or Thomas Jefferson, the greatest statesman there ever was. Someone else might think he is a war criminal. But up until now, we have not had to make that substantive judgment because we have had a series of procedural requirements and tests: can you get everybody in your state to sign off on it? And now you want us to enter into a substantive debate and examination of every postal naming in the country.

And as Mr. Mfume rightly points out, the minute, you know, someone attacks someone's cat, someone is going to attack some-

one's dog, and we are off to the races. And the message to the country is this Congress, which has been mired in a lot of chaos and confusion, cannot even do postal namings anymore, and I hope that is not the message that my colleagues want to send. I will yield back.

Mr. MFUME. I yield back to the Chair.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, by all means.

Mr. HIGGINS. And I thank the gentleman. I would just like to clarify, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, I do believe, if I understand this process correctly, we will have the opportunity to vote yea or nay on the House Floor on individual postal namings. I, myself, have voted "no," reflective of my own deep core principles if I believe a particular naming is outside the parameters of what should be accepted in our country. And I am generally, you know, certainly not in the majority in those votes, but I have the right to express that vote.

Mr. RASKIN. I totally accept that.

Mr. HIGGINS. Would this en bloc be any different? Would not my colleagues, Mrs. Luna and Mr. Perry and then myself have a right to vote "no?"

Mr. RASKIN. Absolutely. In other words, the point to register a symbolic or emotional protest vote, or if you could get everybody behind you, you could stop it on the Floor, is on the Floor. But I think as Members of the Oversight Committee, we cannot get into this business of blockading unanimous consent because none of us will get a post office named at that point.

Chairman COMER. OK. The time has expired. I think we are going to get this resolved within the next 6 weeks. I am hopeful. I will do everything in my power. Mr. Burchett, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will not take 5 minutes, but Staff Sergeant Ryan Knauss was a constituent of mine. His dad still lives there. The road I live on has actually been named after him at my urging to our state legislature. He was the very last American killed over there, and as needless as it was, he was a real hero. He was a young man. He was just a country boy like a lot of them guys that grew up in the Gibbs community, and he wanted to serve his country. And dadgummit, this is all this is about, and it is disgraceful that this hero gets caught up in all this because he is the real deal. He was the real deal. He was what we used to call heroes in this country, and we have kind of lost our way.

And, you know, my mama lost a brother in the Second World War fighting the Nazis, and she never, ever got over that to the day she died. They would play the National Anthem, and she would tear up and just never got over it. And I cannot imagine her parents, the grief that they felt and the grief that this young man's family has felt, and how much it has impacted our community and just the needlessness of it.

So, I would hope we could work this out on behalf of these families. I think it is a fitting tribute to a young man that gave his life. I mean, you just cannot say enough about these young people, Mr. Chairman, and he is one of them. He did not dribble a basketball, and he did not throw a football and everything we call heroes

today, but dadgummit, in East Tennessee, people that wear our country's uniform, especially those that laid down their life, are true heroes. And I think we need to honor it, and we need to put our differences aside and get this worked out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I just want to clarify on process, make sure I understand it.

Chairman COMER. Right.

Mr. BIGGS. If I understand right, you did not block it here in Committee, but it goes by suspension unless somebody actually requests a yea or nay on the Floor. Is that not correct? Am I wrong on that?

Chairman COMER. I think that is right. Is that right? That is right.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, it is a suspension.

Mr. BIGGS. So, it is a suspension vote, and I guess you cannot make sure of that ahead of time, I mean, because apparently—
Voice. A Member can call—

Mr. BIGGS. Yes, any Member can for a roll call, but they have got to be on the Floor when it is called for suspension.

Chairman COMER. Right. That is right.

Mr. BIGGS. Is that right? OK. OK. That is what I wanted to just clarify. Thank you.

Mr. HIGGINS. And, Mr. Chairman, pardon my lack of knowledge here regarding the parliamentary procedure and the—

Mr. BIGGS. I yield to Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS [continuing]. Rules of this Committee, but is there no privileged motion that the Chairman can offer to the Committee that the Ranking Member would support to withdraw? Perhaps it would not address Mrs. Luna, who I deeply respect her position. It is a little bit different. But is there no way to withdraw from the en bloc a particular naming that a Member may have an objection to if that removal was agreed to by the Ranking Member and the Chairman? Is there no privileged motion procedure?

Chairman COMER. There probably could be. In discussions with Luna and the frustration with the Florida delegation, I think, honestly, it would be best to let Mr. Raskin, since he has volunteered, and Moskowitz, and whomever, Soto from Florida, try to get with Wasserman Schultz and get their difference ironed out. The criticism of Perry was exactly what is happening with Mrs. Luna, right? I mean, it is the same thing. It is a lack of courtesy or whatever.

Mr. HIGGINS. Yes, sir, I respect that, and I feel confident that that will be resolved with the help of the Members that have spoken, stated a willingness to help that get resolved. I was just wondering if there is some parliamentary procedural rule that we could follow when, if there is in the future, some particular objection to a singular bill—

Chairman COMER. I think in the future, what we will do is if someone objects to a particular single bill, we will try and work that out.

Mr. HIGGINS. Work that out.

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. And we will try to put all these same bills on the next markup in the next Committee, and hopefully we can get the Florida situation resolved. And if a Member objects to a certain bill, whether it be a Madeleine Albright bill or a Donald Trump bill or whatever, then we will pull that bill and vote on the rest. Is that—

Mr. RASKIN. But, Mr. Chairman, could I just follow up on a question with that—

Chairman COMER. Go ahead.

Mr. RASKIN [continuing]. Because I am very hopeful that we can work out the Luna situation. But I do not know how Mr. Perry feels about this because he could continue to block the whole package over one bill, and I do not know whether we could convince him that it is a dangerous road to go down. I hope we could, because—

Chairman COMER. So, you are going to—

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Chairman COMER. If he pulls a bill, then you all are going to start pulling bills, and—

Mr. RASKIN. Well, I mean, the bill that he is talking about, I think, is Jennifer Wexton's bill. As you know, she is very ill. This means a lot to her. I do not know if it is the last bill she has put in. And we are talking about the first woman Secretary of State of the United States whose family fled Nazism and communism, and, you know, do we really want to see this Committee fall apart over that because that is not a very good look for us either. So, I hope that Mr. Perry would rethink it.

Again, he does not have to vote for it, as Mr. Higgins pointed out, and he does not have to adopt her for a post office in his state, but the Members in Virginia have embraced it. And so, I would be in a tough position letting all those other bills go and saying we will sacrifice this one. It does not look good. It is not a good reflection on the Committee or the Congress if we cannot accomplish that, so I—

Chairman COMER. And, you know, it appears, Mr. Raskin, this unfortunately started in Florida, and I would like to resolve it, believe me.

Mr. RASKIN. I tell you what. If we can resolve—

Chairman COMER. The postal bill is out.

Mr. RASKIN. If we can resolve Florida, can you resolve Pennsylvania? I am not sure I have ever convinced Mr. Perry of anything, but perhaps you could do it.

Chairman COMER. I guess we will have to negotiate on that over the next few weeks.

Mr. RASKIN. Because I think Florida and Pennsylvania will rise or fall together, and so will this Committee, essentially.

Chairman COMER. Do you yield back?

Mr. RASKIN. I am happy to yield back.

Chairman COMER. All right. So, hearing no more discussion, I ask unanimous consent to favorably report the package, but there is an objection. All right.

Since there is an objection, then there is no further business before the Committee.

Pursuant to House Rule XI, 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, the 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 3:46 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

