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

FOR THE  
COMMITTEE ON  
OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

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- \* Letter, November 19, 2024, from Chairman Phil Mendelson opposing H.R. 10062; submitted by Rep. Norton.
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*Documents are available at: [docs.house.gov](https://docs.house.gov).*

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

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**Wednesday, November 20, 2024**

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

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:35 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James Comer [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Comer, Jordan, Gosar, Foxx, Grothman, Cloud, Palmer, Higgins, Sessions, Biggs, Mace, LaTurner, Fallon, Donalds, Perry, Timmons, Burchett, McClain, Boebert, Fry, Luna, Langworthy, Burlison, Raskin, Norton, Lynch, Krishnamoorthi, Khanna, Mfume, Ocasio-Cortez, Bush, Brown, Stansbury, Garcia, Frost, Lee, Crockett, Goldman, Moskowitz, 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 Rule Committee 5(b) [sic] 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 are 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 I do not anticipate, 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.

Our first item for consideration is H.R. 10133, the Timely Stock Disclosure Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 10133, the Timely Stock Disclosure Act, a bill to amend Title 5, United States Code, to require the reporting of periodic transaction reports not later than 15 days after receiving notification of the requirement to report a transaction, but in no case later than 30 days after such transaction and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill should be considered as read and open for amendment 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. 10133, 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 support H.R. 10133, the Timely Stock Disclosure Act. Over 45 years ago, Congress passed the Ethics in Government Act. This landmark legislation addressed conflicts of interest and the appearance of corruption. The goal was and remains preventing real and perceived conflicts of interest among those fortunate enough to receive the public trust. Our ethics laws accomplish this by requiring certain Federal employees and candidates for office to disclose financial interest that may relate to their official duties.

Over the years, Congress has advocated additional legislation with similar intent, including by passing the STOCK Act in 2012, which required financial disclosure flyers to publicly report certain stock transactions within 30 days. That law is intended to provide an additional layer of protection against potentially illegal insider trading that may occur if senior Federal employees and congressional members and senior staff use special knowledge from their official service to trade stocks in a way that benefits them personally.

H.R. 10133 would strengthen the STOCK Act reporting requirements by shortening the current 30-day reporting requirement to 15 days. The idea is that the faster that the public can view the disclosures, the sooner authorities may intervene to address potentially illegal insider trading. I want to thank my colleague, Mr. Burchett from Tennessee, for introducing this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support the Burchett bill. I now recognize Ranking Member Raskin for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very happy to support the Timely Stock Disclosure Act today. The Stop Trading on congressional Knowledge Act, or the STOCK Act, was signed into law in 2012 to address the problem of insider trading in Congress and the executive branch, among other things. It requires the President, VP, senior executive branch officers, Members of Congress, senior congressional staff, and others to report all transactions over \$1,000 involving stocks, bonds, and commodities within 30 days of learning that such transaction has taken place, and no later than 45 days after such transaction.

H.R. 10133 would reduce those reporting requirements to 15 days and 30 days, respectively, requiring more timely disclosure. While this is a modest step in the right direction, it fails to meaningfully and comprehensively address the public's concern that Members of Congress are able to use their access to confidential information to enrich themselves in the stock market, and that their Federal policy-making decisions may be shaped by their own personal financial interests instead of the common good. Members of Congress simply should not be allowed to trade individual stocks

in office. The Floor of the House of Representatives should not be like the Floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

Many bills have been introduced to take this step, which has the support of 88 percent of Democrats and 87 percent of Republicans according to a 2023 poll. The public's position on this is clear, it is compelling, and we should work with the other committees of jurisdiction to pursue legislation to completely ban the trading of individual stocks by Members of Congress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to working with you on that, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the sponsor of the bill, Mr. Burchett from Tennessee, for his statement on the bill.

Mr. BURCHETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I feel like I should withdraw this bill with all the support I am receiving. That kind of scares me just a little bit. I have to go back and reread the bill, but the Timely Stock Disclosure Act is a much-needed step toward transparency. And for the record, my \$9,000 portfolio, which is mutual funds, as managed by my buddy, Tommy Seiler, in Knoxville, Tennessee, so I totally support removing individual stock trades, and I will vote accordingly.

But this bill would amend the STOCK Act of 2012 to reduce the periodic transaction reporting timeline from 30 to 45 days to 15 to 30 days. You are right, Ranking Member, of this: I wish we could go farther. We are trying to eat this hog one bite at a time. And specifically, this bill requires the President, Vice President, Members of Congress, and senior government officials, at G15 or higher and are making over \$120,000 per year, to report their stock trades within 15 days after they are notified that they need to submit the report, but under no circumstances later than 30 days after the transaction itself. Congress has a 19-percent approval rating, and most of the country thinks this body is corrupt, I being one of those, and I do not blame them. Our constituents elected us to write laws directly impacting the American people, yet certain Members consistently outperform even the best hedge funds in the stock market, raising questions about the intent behind the bills we passed, rightfully so.

But Congress does not have a monopoly on government corruption. We have seen it through all branches of government, and additionally, our Federal agencies are constantly writing rules that have the force of law while continue to trade stocks. If Federal employees and officials want to continue to participate in the market they regulate, there needs to be some dadgum transparency. While I believe there should be a total ban on Members of Congress and high-ranking government employees trading stocks, passing this legislation is a necessary step in the right direction in helping restore confidence in the U.S. Government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member, for your support.

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, and the amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 10133, 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—the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. I request a roll call vote please.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote has been requested by the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. Biggs. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 10132, the Federal Agency Performance Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 10132, the Federal Agency Performance Act, a bill to improve performance and accountability in 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. 10132, 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 support the Federal Agency Performance Act of 2024, which provides additional transparency, accountability, and priorities for the Federal Government. Federal agencies have many different missions. To meet these missions, they are required to develop goals and objectives. Developing the goal is an important first step toward progress. However, we know that more must be done to ensure that these goals and objectives are being achieved.

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, as later modernized in 2010 by a reform act known as GPRAMA, collectively established a solid foundation of reforms to improve the overall performance and outcomes of Federal agencies. GPRAMA addressed a number of issues, such as focusing attention on cross-cutting management issues, enhancing the usefulness of performance information, increasing transparency, and ensuring leadership commitment and attention to improving the performance of Federal agencies. H.R. 10132 builds upon existing law to codify the performance management practices that have shown the most positive results.

This bill requires agencies to proactively assess their progress toward achieving their strategic goals and objectives. It ensures that



merely developing the goal is not enough. Agencies would be required to track their progress and develop plans to address identified risk to not achieving their stated goals. This bill also requires agencies to determine whether they need more evidence to better assess their progress. Agencies would also be required to assign senior leadership attention to completing these efforts, a commonsense reform that ensures that the work gets done.

I would like to thank Committee Members, William Timmons and Ro Khanna for leading this bill in the House of Representatives. I urge my colleagues to support this important, sensible, and bipartisan legislation. I now recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and thanks to our colleagues, Mr. Timmons and Mr. Khanna, for leading this bill to modernize the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, which I thought we referred to as GPRA, not GPRAMA. I do not know.

Chairman COMER. Yes, I am sure that is probably right.

Mr. RASKIN. But I am pleased to support the legislation. I want to thank the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee Chairman, Gary Peters, for his leadership over on the Senate side. GPRA first established a performance management framework for government agencies and was last modernized in 2010, so we are definitely overdue for another look to make sure that the framework is operating as effectively and efficiently as it can.

The Federal Agency Performance Act would codify OMB's practice of conducting regular strategic reviews of Federal Agency performance goals and ensure that all priority goals are tied explicitly to the President's budget with milestones that can be achieved within a single Presidential term. It would also set new requirements to improve publicly available data on *Performance.gov*, allowing greater transparency into agency progress. Additionally, it would require each governmentwide priority goal to be led by at least one OMB official and one agency official. The bill makes other commonsense updates to ensure Federal agencies are providing services to the American people as efficiently as possible.

I appreciate, Mr. Chairman, you are bringing this up for a vote today and encourage my colleagues to support the legislative handiwork of Mr. Timmons and Mr. Khanna. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Correctly pronouncing acronyms is not my strong suit, so I am sure you are right.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Timmons from South Carolina.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also want to thank Mr. Khanna for partnering with me on this important legislation.

Today, I rise in favor of H.R. 10132, the Federal Agency Performance Act of 2024. If enacted, this legislation would hold Federal agencies more accountable for their performance and ensure greater transparency in how they spend taxpayer dollars. The Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 already made significant reforms to improve agency performance outcomes. This bill builds on those reforms by adding new proven practices that will deliver even better results.

Specifically, the bill requires agencies to develop strategic plans for how taxpayer money should be spent, and just as importantly, it forces agency employees to report their progress toward achieving their goals. Agencies will also need to assess the risks that could prevent them from meeting those goals and put in place strategies to address those risks. By establishing a more rigorous strategic review process, improving access to publicly available data, and incorporating evidence-based activities into planning, we create a stronger framework for how taxpayer money is spent. This will lead to greater transparency and accountability for both governmentwide and agency-specific performance goals.

The Federal Agency Performance Act of 2024 also incorporates key recommendations from the Government Accountability Office, which advocates for a more comprehensive approach to planning and management in the Federal Government. It also codifies a success benchmark by requiring annual strategic reviews of each agency's priority goals. These reviews are essential, helping leadership focus on top-level objectives and ensure that we stay on track. As Members of the Oversight Committee, it is our responsibility to protect taxpayer dollars from waste, fraud, and abuse. This bill takes an important step in establishing the guardrails needed to ensure government spending is efficient and effective, while rooting out wasteful practices within our Federal agencies. An identical version of this legislation unanimously passed the Senate in February, and I hope this body will soon follow.

I urge all my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation which codifies practices that have proven to encourage greater transparency, accountability, and improve agency performance, and with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The sponsor of the bill 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 favorably reporting H.R. 10132, 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—the Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. I request a recorded vote.

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

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 10155, the Financial Management Risk Reduction Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 10155, the Financial Management Risk Reduction Act, a bill to amend Section 7504 of Title 31, United States Code, to improve the single audit requirements.

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. 10155, 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 now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill and the amendment.

I support the Financial Management Risk Reduction Act of 2024, which will improve the quality and completeness of financial audit data of large Federal grant recipients. If an entity receives a Federal financial assistance from the Federal Government, we should be able to closely review their financial statements and expenditures of Federal funds to ensure that every transaction is legitimate.

The law requires that non-Federal entities that receive more than \$300,000 in Federal awards annually undergo this close review, otherwise known as a financial single audit. Unfortunately, longstanding issues prevent efforts from identifying recipients that should have submitted a single audit but did not. Even more troubling, the Office of Management and Budget has not designated any entity to conduct a governmentwide single audit quality check since 2007. Why is this important?

For example, trillions of dollars of COVID-19-related financial assistance was distributed, in many cases to first-time award recipients who were non-Federal entities. The recipients were receiving substantial sums of Federal funds that needed this oversight. Routine governmentwide reviews of these audits is important to ensure the information is both reliable and useful, which in turn helps the agency officials monitor the spending of these Federal dollars. That is important, but having the right analytical tools to use this data is important, too.

H.R. 10155 will require the development of these analytic tools to use this data to identify fraud risks across the government. Rather than waiting to find out that there are pervasive or severe issues with the use of Federal financial assistance funds, the Federal Government should be proactive in identifying and addressing any issues. This bill will also target effectiveness. The bill includes a requirement for the Government Accountability Office, or GAO, to review the effectiveness of strategies and tools that come from these governmentwide reviews. It also calls for an assessment of the reporting burdens for these auditors and audited entities. Last, the bill asks GAO to evaluate the responsiveness of the Federal

agencies to the finding of these audits. This holds them accountable.

I want to thank Committee Member Marjorie Taylor Greene from Georgia for leading this bill in the House of Representatives. I urge my colleagues to support this sensible reform. I now recognize Ranking Member Raskin for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I am pleased to support this legislation which would indeed improve the quality and usability of independent audit data and enhance oversight of Federal funds. The Single Audit Act of 1984 requires Federal grant recipients who get more than \$750,000 to report an independent audit of their internal financial controls annually to the government. It sought to increase accountability while reducing burden on grant recipients by mandating one single consolidated audit rather than audits on a grant-by-grant basis. In 2022, over 40,000 state, local, tribal and territorial governments, and not-for-profits submitted single audits.

The Financial Management Risk Reduction Act addresses recommendations made by the GAO which were aimed at increasing the useability of single-audit information to reduce Federal financial management risk. The bill codifies certain portions of OMB's uniform grants guidance requiring agencies to conduct quality control reviews on its audits, and directs OMB to coordinate a governmentwide audit quality review once every 6 years. Finally, the bill would direct OMB to create a governmentwide strategy on financial risk regarding single audits, and instructs GSA to create analytical tools to use single audit data more effectively. It is a good bill. It will improve the quality and accessibility of audit data. It will increase transparency and accountability of Federal funds. I urge all of our colleagues to support it. I yield back.

Mr. FALLON. [Presiding.] Do any other Members wish to be heard?

[No response.]

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

All those in favor signifying by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Mr. FALLON. All those opposed signify by saying nay.

[No response.]

Mr. FALLON. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 10155, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Mr. FALLON. All opposed, signifying by saying no.

[No response.]

Mr. FALLON. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. FALLON. Yes. Sorry.

Mr. BIGGS. I request a recorded vote.

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

Our next item up for consideration is H.R. 10062, the Freedom to Petition the Government Act. The Clerk will designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 10062, the Freedom to Petition the Government Act, a bill to amend Title 29 of the District of Columbia Official Code to treat meetings held with officials of the Federal Government, which are held in the District of Columbia, as activities not constituting doing business in the District of Columbia for purposes of determining whether organizations are required to register with the District of Columbia.

Mr. FALLON. 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 designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 10062, as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

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

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

I am happy to support H.R. 10062, the Freedom to Petition the Government Act. The bill amends D.C. Code to ensure that nonprofit organizations who are headquartered outside of the District of Columbia are not considered to be doing business within the District if their work is only with the Federal Government. Requiring nonprofits who are trying to petition their Federal Government on various issues to register with the District Government opens them up to additional and unnecessary liabilities. It also creates a chilling effect for these nonprofits.

The D.C. Attorney General has already tried exploiting this situation to investigate nonprofits whose only advocacy is with the Federal, not the District Government. These nonprofits have not availed themselves to the District, only to the Federal offices they are meeting with. H.R. 10062 fixes this problem by giving these nonprofit organizations the freedom to petition their government without threat of reprisal from a jurisdiction they would otherwise not be subject to. The fix is a win for free speech and for the various organizations that advocate in front of Federal officials.

I thank Representative Biggs for introducing this important legislation. I encourage my colleagues to support it. I now yield to the Ranking Member for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. We were doing so well there. In bill after bill, we had real bipartisan unity. Now I am afraid I have got to oppose this one, which I cannot say I fully understand yet, but it clearly looks like one more attempt to interfere in the local affairs of the people of the District of Columbia, which has been a favorite political target of some in the Majority of this Congress.

The Majority has worked to overturn a variety of local D.C. laws and to put the home rule government representing more than 700,000 tax-paying American citizens in a straitjacket. And there are obviously some people who prefer to govern the District of Co-

lumbia directly as a colonial population rather than to grant its statehood petition.

But let us look at what this so-called Freedom to Petition the Government Act does. The title suggests nicely that the bill is about protecting the rights to free speech, association, petition, and privacy. Of course, nobody's right to petition the government or to engage in free speech or association has been violated in any way, or at least nobody has explained how it has been. Businesses, both not-for-profit and for-profit businesses, have to register to do business in any state or in the District of Columbia where they do business, and that is not a violation of their First Amendment Rights. In fact, the Supreme Court has repeatedly held that it is perfectly OK for a state or for Washington, DC. to require businesses that are doing business there to register, you know, even if they are lawfully incorporated in a different jurisdiction.

So, I am not quite sure why this is getting blown up into a big First Amendment question. It might have something to do with an investigation that has reportedly been launched by the Attorney General for the District of Columbia into the business dealings of Leonard Leo and certain allied not-for-profit organizations. There was an article in *Politico* which said, "What Happens When an Attorney General Dares to Investigate Leonard Leo's Network," and the article began by saying, "Allies of Leonard Leo have mounted a months-long offensive against the man investigating the judicial activist network," and I think that may explain what this bill is about, but I would invite the legislative sponsors to really explain what is going on here.

The District of Columbia, of course, is not unique in requiring business organizations, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, to register when they are doing business in the jurisdiction, and it is very hard to see why there should be some kind of exception carved out here. Anybody who does business in any state or in the District of Columbia should be subject to the laws of that state. And if any state or the District of Columbia is violating anybody's right to petition government or right to engage in First Amendment activity, then that should be struck down. But this looks like a little bit of a wolf in sheep's clothing, and so I am going to oppose it, and would invite you, Mr. Chairman or the sponsor, to explain what this is really all about and what is the genesis of this legislation. I yield back. Thanks.

Mr. FALLON. Thank you. Do any other Members wish to be heard? The Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. Thanks, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate this markup and for consideration of my bill, the Freedom to Petition the Government Act. Federal Government officials, officials at the White House, at Federal agencies, Members of Congress, our staff, and others are constantly meeting with nonprofits to discuss their work. So, let us clarify that: these are nonprofits. They are not just any corporate or sole proprietor. These are nonprofit organizations, and they are meeting solely with Federal officials on Federal property. That is what the bill says. I do not know why that is that is confusing to you.

Anyway, we meet with them constantly. They want to talk about the impact of Federal Government action on it. These nonprofits

must comply with existing Federal law to maintain nonprofit status. Currently, District of Columbia law requires that a nonprofit not headquartered within the District must register with the District to hold meetings with Members of Congress or other Federal officials. That is what their law requires. D.C. Code requires a nonprofit to register when it is doing business within the District, even if that business has nothing to do with D.C. That is like, if they are going to meet with the representatives of the Federal Government on Federal Government property, they include that in there, which is why we actually tried to clarify that with the ANS, with negotiations with the D.C. Government. So, this law opens these nonprofits to unnecessary, frivolous, and partisan investigation from the D.C. Attorney General, and that creates additional liabilities and a clear chilling effect for nonprofits that want to engage with the Federal Government. And, by the way, we are not interfering with D.C. law. D.C. law is interfering with Americans' right to meet with their Federal Government officials.

The Freedom to Petition the Government Act amends the D.C. Code to stop this practice. Nonprofits should be able to travel to the seat of our Nation's Capital to advocate, inquire, and engage with the Federal Government, free of retribution from partisan efforts to stop such outreach. It explicitly states within the D.C. Code that nonprofits not headquartered in the District do not need to register with the District. That is what this bill does. This protects nonprofits from opening themselves up to overzealous investigations in a jurisdiction that would otherwise have no claim over these nonprofit's actions, which is very distinct from what the Ranking Member was describing.

This provides these organizations the freedom to engage with Federal officials, and I urge my colleagues to support this common-sense legislation. And I would point out we have acceded to some of the requests of the D.C. officials, and that is reflected in the ANS. I am not representing in any way that they support this. I am just saying that we tried to meet them where they had concerns, and that is what the ANS is doing, and so I urge passage of this, and I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. Will the gentleman yield for one question?

Mr. BIGGS. Happily.

Mr. RASKIN. Do you understand that the District of Columbia has the exact same law that exists in your state and in every other state with respect to the requirement to register if you are doing business in the state, and that language does not mention Congress or lobbying anybody? It simply says that if you are a corporation from another state or foreign corporation, you are doing business there, you have got to register, and that exists in Arizona.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes. So, I will respond and say this. Here is the deal. The seat of the Federal Government is not in Arizona, it is not in Maryland, it is here. And these nongovernment operations, they are coming here to meet, as we say in the bill, on Federal property, to meet with Federal officials.

Mr. RASKIN. If that is all they are doing—

Mr. BIGGS. That is what it says right there.

Mr. RASKIN. But they are not doing business, no? But in other words, they are not there—

Mr. BIGGS. But the bill, if you read the law——

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS [continuing]. Their current law——

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS [continuing]. It does not provide that exception.

Mr. RASKIN. It does not need an exception. If they are not——

Mr. BIGGS. Sure it does. They chose to investigate Mr. Leo. Why?

Mr. RASKIN. If he has offices.

Mr. BIGGS. He did not have offices here.

Mr. RASKIN. He has no not-for-profit——

Mr. BIGGS. He had a post office box that he checked periodically. That is what you are saying is business.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. Well, then I think that goes to the question of whether or not he is doing business.

Mr. BIGGS. That is correct.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. And that is the point that we are trying to clarify. I am glad you agree that that was the question in the Leo case. We are clarifying it now.

Mr. RASKIN. Can you just explain why? Again, I am just trying to find out because this is the first I am learning of this whole thing. Why? Why do we need to intervene to pass a Federal law about this? If they are not doing business in the District of Columbia, it should not be an issue, right?

Mr. BIGGS. That is correct. It should not be, but it has proven to be, and your position would be, well, Leo was doing business, and my position would be, he was not doing business——

Mr. RASKIN. Well, I have no idea whether or not he was. Is there a case on that? Is there a case brought on it within the District of Columbia?

Mr. BIGGS. Yes, they brought action against him. So, the point I am trying to make to you is, basically you are kind of agreeing with me, I think.

Mr. RASKIN. I agree. If he is not doing business in the District of Columbia——

Mr. BIGGS. And I am trying to provide clarity saying, look, if you are coming in here and you want to meet with us and you are meeting on Federal property, then why would D.C. even consider it has jurisdiction? And in the correspondence that we have had with the D.C. Attorney General, he was adamant that they did at first. I think he has kind of walked back away from that. That is one of the reasons I think it has to be clarified.

Mr. RASKIN. OK.

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. FALLON. Do any other Members wish to be heard?

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. FALLON. Ms. Norton first.

Mr. CLOUD. Oh, I am sorry.

Mr. FALLON. Ms. Norton, you are recognized.

Ms. NORTON. I would like to start by asking unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter from D.C. Council Chairman, Phil Mendelson, opposing this bill.

Mr. FALLON. Without objection, so ordered.



Ms. NORTON. I strongly oppose this bill which violates the District of Columbia's right to self-government. This bill amends D.C. law to exempt certain business organizations doing business in D.C. from registering with D.C. even though each state requires business organizations, whether for profit or nonprofit, doing business in that state to register there. The intent of this bill is to reduce D.C.'s authority to apply its law to nonprofits that are formed under the laws of another jurisdiction doing business in D.C. Why would this Committee amend D.C.'s business registration law which is like the business registration law of each state?

Contrary to Republicans' claims, this bill is not about the First Amendment, which, of course, no enforceable law can violate. There are two reasons for this bill. First, this Committee has abused its undemocratic authority over D.C. more this Congress than in any time in at least 2 decades. This is the eighth bill this Committee has marked up or brought directly to the Floor to repeal or amend D.C. laws or regulations. These bills have ranged from stripping D.C. of its authority to increase criminal penalties, to repealing a D.C. environmental regulation, to amending D.C. public-sector employment laws.

Second, the D.C. Attorney General apparently did something this Committee considers radical. He enforced D.C.'s Nonprofit Corporation Act. The D.C. Attorney General reportedly is investigating nonprofits affiliated with a conservative legal activist for misusing charitable funds for the activist's personal benefit. This bill is step two in this Committee's response to the D.C. Attorney General's reported investigation. Step one occurred last year when this Committee launched an investigation of the D.C. Attorney General's reported investigation. My Republican colleagues are correct that D.C. has the constitutional authority to legislate on D.C. matters, but they are wrong that Congress has a constitutional duty to do so. Legislation on 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 Revolutionary War was fought to give consent to the governed and end taxation without representation. Yet D.C. residents cannot consent to any action taken by Congress, whether on national or local D.C. matters, 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, they would bring my D.C. Statehood bill, which gives D.C. residents voting representation in Congress and full local self-government, to the Floor. Congress has the constitutional authority to admit the state of Washington D.C. It simply lacks the will to do so. I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

Mr. FALLON. Do any other Members wish to be heard?

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. FALLON. The Chair recognizes Mr. Cloud.

Mr. CLOUD. I yield my time to Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for yielding, Mr. Cloud. So, let us talk about what was just read from one member of the D.C. Council. The council person, I do not know who it was, mentioned jurisdictions of other states, that other states require entities that are doing business in those states to register.

We agree with that. That is what happens. D.C. does that. We are not taking that away. But one thing that they did not mention in there is that we are talking about the Federal Government, and we are talking about where are those meetings are taking place, what are these NGOs coming in to do, and they are dealing with Federal officers. And I want to read something here that I find intriguing from a letter from the D.C. Attorney General. This is his defense of this: “Out-of-state nonprofits that choose to register and do business in the District enjoy a number of benefits by virtue of that choice, including unparalleled proximity to key players and decisionmakers across the Federal Government, such as Members of Congress and their staff.” But here is the deal, if you are a foreign non-government organization or a not-for-profit, and you are coming in and you want to visit with us, under the D.C. Code, that could be interpreted to be conducting business. And if that is the case, then you are chilling free speech, and you are chilling NGOs, not-for-profits coming in. That is the problem, I mean, because he is requiring registering.

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

Mr. BIGGS. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. Well, has that happened? In other words—I was not aware that the District of Columbia was interceding with not-for-profit corporations that just come to Washington for the purposes of meeting a Member of Congress and saying you have got to register to do that.

Mr. BIGGS. So, he has claimed that authority, essentially, in the Leo case. So, if you look at the Leo case, which even *Politico*, which broke that story, admits there was nothing there. There was rumor and innuendo. But he chose to investigate that, even though it looks like Mr. Leo and whatever his nonprofits are, and I do not know anything about his case, but they all seem to be located outside and actually perhaps even based in Arlington, and he has chosen to investigate that. He has not defended that saying, yes, I think they are doing business here.

Mr. RASKIN. Can I just ask two other questions about the scope of your bill, just to understand? I am really trying to understand this.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. So, one is the not-for-profit corporations that are, you know, say, organized in Arizona or in Maryland, may have to also go and talk to state legislatures as well. Should they be exempt from having to register in those states doing business? Why is it not written to deal with people who are going to the state capitols, you know, in Annapolis or Albany or whatever, what have you?

Mr. BIGGS. So, I think that becomes a state issue, and D.C. is under the Federal control of Congress. So, let me just clarify additionally—

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. If I am—because I used to work with a nonprofit in Phoenix. If we have to go to, say, let us say Dallas, or something like that, we do not have to register in Dallas for me to go in and stop in and meet with them.

Mr. RASKIN. Right.

Mr. BIGGS. That is what we are saying.

Mr. RASKIN. But is that the rule here? Because I had not heard any complaints about that happening.

Mr. BIGGS. Well, I think you should. I am sure you are privy to the responses that the local AG gave to the letters written by Mr. Comer and Mr. Jordan those are the two Chairmen—and that colloquy through verse that they gave, through prose that they gave. But it looks to me like he is making the assertion that, yes, yes, that he could do that if they chose, and so that is why I think the bill is important. And if, by the way, if you do not think that that is happening, then this bill will do no harm either. But the point is, if it is happening, which I would suggest to you, this attorney general, at least in one case, potentially did that, then maybe we should intercede.

Mr. RASKIN. And again, if I could just ask one other question about the dimensions of the proposal, it says this applies to all entities, presumably under 501(c), so that means 501(c)(3), (c)(4), (c)(6), or is it just (c)(3)s?

Mr. BIGGS. You are talking about the ANS.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes. You think about ANS?

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, it looks like it—

Mr. BIGGS. It is all, yes, all 501(c)s.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. So, have we looked at the implications of that, if there is a (c)(4), (c)(6).

Mr. BIGGS. If they are not coming in, if they are actually conducting business here, I do not know that this statute is going to provide that exemption for them. That is—

Mr. RASKIN. I guess it is the grammar of it that puzzles me. When say “holding a meeting with a Member of Congress,” does this only apply to those 501(c) organizations that are holding a meeting, or is that sufficient to make them exempt to go and hold one meeting, even if they are doing other business in the District of Columbia?

Mr. BIGGS. Well, that is one of the reasons that we have limited it because if they are conducting business here, we get it, we understand. But in reality, if they are trying to exercise fundamental rights, then the D.C. AG should not be investigating, prosecuting, whatever you choose to say.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. I would agree with this, and I would get on this if you just put the word “only” in there, only holding a meeting with a Member of Congress because that would be ridiculous.

Mr. BIGGS. Well, what about if you go to lunch with a Member of Congress?

Mr. RASKIN. Only holding a meeting or having lunch with a Member of Congress. I mean, I think having lunch would incorporate. But what I do not want this to become, suddenly, like an escape hatch for people who are actually doing business here and saying “well, we did a meeting with a Member of Congress,” so now everybody would acknowledge we are doing business, we are suddenly exempt from the law.

Mr. BIGGS. I think you are straining at a gnat.

Mr. RASKIN. I really do not think I am. I think I went right to the heart of it.

Mr. BIGGS. I do not think you are going to the heart of it. I think you are saying, because I think as the council member said, “gee, this whole body has been out to get D.C.” We are not out to get D.C. What I am trying to do is protect, and we are trying to carve out protections for the D.C. Government as well as for citizens to competition the government.

Mr. RASKIN. But is holding a meeting enough to exempt someone from D.C. law with respect to registration, even if everybody would concede that they are also engaging in business?

Mr. BIGGS. I do not think so. I do not think so.

Mr. RASKIN. I think we have got to still rework the language.

Mr. BIGGS. So, to that end, Mr. Chairman, I would ask unanimous request that the two letters written by yourself and Chairman Jordan, as well as the two responses from the Attorney General from the District of Columbia, be admitted into the record.

Chairman COMER. [Presiding.] Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BIGGS. And also, I would also request that Chapter 4 of the District of Columbia Code be admitted into the record as well.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Goldman.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Thank you. I am going to followup on the Ranking Member’s questions because I do want to get down to the rub because the appearance here is that the D.C. AG began an investigation into Leonard Leo and all of his various nonprofits because there were allegations that Mr. Leo was misusing the nonprofits for his personal gain. And I assume Mr. Biggs, you agree, that if true, that is a valid basis for an investigation. Is that right?

Mr. BIGGS. By the appropriate authority, yes.

Mr. GOLDMAN. OK. So, then you are saying that the D.C. Attorney General is not the appropriate authority because the D.C. Attorney General does not have jurisdiction or should not have jurisdiction if the nonprofit that they are investigating only has a drop box in the District of Columbia. Is that right?

Mr. BIGGS. Well, I mean, you have asked a compound question and asked me isn’t that right? What I would suggest to you is, I think that I think that is probably right.

Mr. GOLDMAN. All right. Well, let me ask it this way then. Fine, does this bill—and I am going to get to what Mr. Raskin was getting at here—does this bill, in your view, say that if a 501(c) organization has a meeting with the Federal Government or Congress, then there is no jurisdiction for the District of Columbia’s Attorney General to conduct an investigation into that 501(c) organization, regardless of all of the other activity that that 501(c) is doing?

Mr. BIGGS. I would disagree with your interpretation. We have defined, quite frankly, I think a minimal carveout ultimately saying and intimating this is not doing business in D.C.

Mr. GOLDMAN. So, you are saying that if you have a meeting or if you are addressing the Federal Government in some fashion, Congress, some other executive branch agency, that that does not qualify as jurisdiction. That is what this bill does. It says that if that is the conduct you are doing in D.C., then that does not qualify. That does not satisfy D.C.’s jurisdiction to investigate.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes, I am looking at and I am comparing it to 29–105.05 of the D.C. Code. And we are saying, if you are here, and you notice we just said holding meetings with Members of Congress. That does not constitute under 29–105.05 the activity for which you should be required to register with the District of Columbia.

Mr. GOLDMAN. OK. What happens if a 501(c) has a meeting with another 501(c) that is in D.C., headquartered in D.C., perhaps gives money to that other 501(c) in D.C., and then separately goes and has a meeting with Mr. Biggs about something else? Does D.C. have jurisdiction over that 501(c)?

Mr. BIGGS. Well, that is a baffling question, and you truly have a dizzying interpretation of this, I will tell you. What we have done, is we have carved out a spot, and we said if you are going there for meetings with Members of Congress, their staff, if you are meeting on Federal property, you do not fall within the jurisdiction. And what you are saying is, if they come in here and they are actually conducting business, other business, well, that is a different animal, isn't it? Do you think it is a different animal?

Mr. GOLDMAN. I do not think this bill makes it clear. I think this bill allows for stripping jurisdiction.

Mr. BIGGS. And if I can—

Mr. GOLDMAN. The way it is written, it allows for stripping jurisdiction of any organization, any 501(c) organization, that has a meeting with Congress, regardless of whether they are doing other business in D.C., and that is why Mr. Raskin's suggestion that you say "will strip jurisdiction." If your only business in D.C. is meeting with the Federal Government, that is one thing, but that is not what this bill says. So, if you want to clarify that, I will happily support that well. So, the problem is, this is—

Mr. BIGGS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GOLDMAN. One minute. I am just finishing up my time. I am happy to continue. But the problem with this bill is what you are doing and what is very clear that you are doing, based on Chairman Comer and Chairman Jordan's letters, is you are trying to interfere and intervene in an ongoing investigation by the D.C. Attorney General into the Republicans' biggest benefactor. And when we talk about the weaponization of government, the idea that the Federal Government would try to interfere and intervene and supersede an investigation based on very vague language when we all know that Mr. Leo does a lot more than meet with Federal Government officials, and that all of his organizations do a lot more business in Washington than meet with Congress, you are trying to backdoor in a way to strip jurisdiction over Leonard Leo by the D.C. Attorney General by including very vague language that can be interpreted to say as long as you are meeting with Congress, you have one meeting, if you have 100 meetings with other people, it does not matter, you are exempt from jurisdiction. And that is the problem with this bill, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Ms. Boebert.

Ms. BOEBERT. I yield to my colleague from Arizona, Andy Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. I thank the gentlelady for yielding. I felt we were having some kind of rational colloquy there until we kind of left the universe here, and now we are wandering in space. I am going to

try to bring us back down and say—I happen to have the Code here, and I encourage you to read the Code. Because the way we have crafted this language is, basically, if you are here for a fly-in, then the D.C. AG does not have jurisdiction over you, OK? That is the point. Well, you guys are trying to come up with every nefarious thing and every rationale you can possibly come up with and say, “well, gee, we got to expand this thing.” This is a very simple, straightforward language, says, if you are having a meeting, that is not conducting business in D.C., but the ordinance defines all kinds of other stuff that is business. We did not touch that other stuff. We touched if you are coming in for a fly-in to meet with Moskowitz, or anybody, particularly Moskowitz. In particular, I was thinking about that. You are protected from investigation, hassle from the D.C. AG. You do not have to register with them, but if you are conducting business, we have not touched you. That is what is baffling to me.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Will the gentleman yield? Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BIGGS. Well, you have to ask the gentlelady. It is her time.

Ms. BOEBERT. I yield.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Thank you, Ms. Boebert. You are avoiding the question, Mr. Biggs, and it seems intentional, and the reason why we are skeptical over here is that Mr. Leo has declared he is not cooperating with the investigation. Chairman Comer and Chairman Jordan have tried to intervene and interfere in this investigation, and now we have a jurisdiction-stripping bill in the Oversight Committee that is clearly directly related to this investigation. So, please spare me the outrage that we are skeptical given the timeline here. But the question I have for you is, as you interpret this bill, if you are saying a fly-in is exempt from jurisdiction, you do not have to register. If somebody does a fly-in and also satisfies one of those other elements of the Code that would establish doing business in D.C., does that organization still have to register because of that other conduct, separate and apart from the fly-in?

Mr. BIGGS. That is the way I interpret it. That is why I said if you read the ordinance, you will get a pretty good idea how they are attacking registration for business activities. We are simply saying you are here, you are having a meeting with Members of Congress, that is not a business activity. Now, if you go out and you start conducting other business, then there is nothing in here that protects you from that jurisdiction. We are not stripping jurisdiction. We are trying to refine and define and protect fundamental civil rights to speak out and meet with and petition your government. That is what we are trying to protect.

Mr. GOLDMAN. And, by the way—

Mr. BIGGS. And by the way, you know, I am not outraged. I mean, I am happy to have the colloquy. I think it is fine. It is good. But if you are saying that you do not trust me, that is fine, too, but for all of you guys who are on the other side now saying, oh, guys, we have to have bipartisanship, we have to have trust, I am telling you what I think this bill does, I am telling you why we did it. And you are approaching it with this massive amount of skepticism, and that is fine, because we have a history of skepticism, particularly in this Committee. But if we are ever going to get past

it, at some point you got to say, well, this really does not do everything we said. We could create every hypothetical in the world because we are a bunch of stinking lawyers who went to law school. We spent all of our time getting hypotheticals all the time. But the bottom line is, we are saying, look, you are coming in, you are meeting with a Member of Congress. For purposes of the D.C. Code, which we otherwise are holding harmless, that does not constitute doing business in the District. That is the point.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BIGGS. The gentlelady needs to yield.

Ms. BOEBERT. Yes.

Mr. GOLDMAN. I appreciate that. The skepticism is because laws are interpreted and they are implemented, and so you have to consider hypotheticals to anticipate how they will be interpreted and implemented. And the concern I have here is if what this bill is actually intending to do what you say it is, A, it is not written clearly, and B, it would not accomplish the goals of Chairman Comer and Chairman Jordan because it would almost certainly not strip jurisdiction from the D.C. Attorney General against Leonard Leo.

Mr. BIGGS. Reclaiming Ms. Boebert's time, I will say, and you have just undercut your whole stinking argument where you have developed your skepticism because I would not protect Leonard Leo with this. What we are doing is we are protecting the people who are flying in from any kind of overreach on the part of the D.C. AG. That is the point.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Is there an example of, that you can cite, of that happening?

Mr. BIGGS. Well, if you cannot find an example, then why do you care because then it is no harm, no foul.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Well, I am asking you, is there an actual example of a D.C. Attorney General doing an investigation of a 501(c) that its only business and only contact with Washington D.C. is to fly in to meet with a Member of Congress?

Mr. BIGGS. I would refer you to the responses of the D.C. AG to the letters from Chairman Comer and Chairman Jordan, where, at least the way I interpret it, he is implying that he has that authority.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Well, it is weird—

Chairman COMER. OK. Ms. Boebert's time has expired. Mr. Moskowitz?

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I think this is healthy, right? Having a discussion about a bill, I think that is the whole point of workshoping things. So, just to go back to Ranking Member Raskin's question, which I think you are answering, I think we just want it to be just a tiny bit clearer because obviously legislative intent is part of the record. So, your intent, and you believe the language is not an exemption if you are doing business in D.C.

Mr. BIGGS. That is correct.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. OK. Yes, that is what we want to hear. It is not an exemption, right? So, coming in and meeting with a Member, right? If you do business in D.C., is not an exemption.

Mr. BIGGS. That is correct because you would still be subject to the Code because the only thing that would not be doing business.

So, we are just basically saying you are not doing business pursuant to the D.C. Code if you are meeting with Members of Congress or the staff.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. All right. So, I will say it in reverse. If you do not do business in D.C., coming and meeting with a Member of Congress does not give D.C. jurisdiction.

Mr. BIGGS. Correct.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. OK.

Mr. RASKIN. If the gentleman would yield.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. I will yield.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much. I actually think we have made tremendous progress here because I think, substantively, we agree. I think we are converging around the idea that a not-for-profit that is incorporated elsewhere does not "do business" in the District of Columbia simply because there is a meeting with a Member of Congress, or, as you have said, another Federal representative or employee. If you come in to meet with the IRS, you come in to meet with the Department of state, that does not turn you into someone doing business in the District of Columbia. I think that the language is a bit inartful, so it could be open to different available interpretations. But and, you know, I would be prepared to support that idea if we could, you know, work that language out more specifically, you know, despite the fact that it is not clear that it is necessary, but I think we all would agree to that.

Mr. BIGGS. So, if you would yield, Mr. Moskowitz. So, the language we have here was developed in consultation with the Mayor's Office. That is that is how we ended up with that specific, which is—I cannot see it without my glasses.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. 11. It is bracketed 11. So, that language itself was developed in consultation with the Mayor's Office, which is why it says what it says.

Mr. RASKIN. I mean, given the legislative history that is involved in this conversation, I really have no particular problem with it. I do not quite see its necessity, but there is a lot of stuff around here that is not necessary.

Mr. BIGGS. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. But, you know, I would not fight it. I do not know that I would support it, because I do not see it as being necessary. But I like your clarifying explanation that just the activity of holding a meeting itself does not confer the status of doing business in the District of Columbia.

Mr. BIGGS. That is correct.

Mr. RASKIN. All right, and I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Moskowitz.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Mr. Moskowitz, may I yield?

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. I yield.

Mr. GOLDMAN. I want to just clarify that this is part of the reason of the skepticism, is that if that is the intent of the bill, it is a useless bill. It is redundant, it is unnecessary because I do not think anyone can cite a particular case or investigation that hinges on jurisdiction based solely on one fly-in or one meeting with Congress or one meeting with the Federal Government. And that is where the skepticism becomes, is that it is unusual to write a law



to address something that is not a problem, where a problem does not exist. If you are making clear that jurisdiction is not conferred based on only a meeting with Congress or the Federal Government, I do not have objection to that.

If what this bill says, and this is where it is not clear, that if you have a meeting with Congress or the Federal Government, then it exempts you from jurisdiction, that would mean that entities that do lots of business in Washington, DC, and also have a meeting in Congress are no longer a subject to the jurisdiction of Washington, DC, and that obviously would be a very problematic bill. So, I urge you to correct and clarify that, Mr. Biggs, and I do not think you will get a lot of objection, because it is not clear in the bill.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. [Inaudible].

VOICE. [Inaudible] microphone, sir.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. I can be loud without the microphone. You mentioned something about the Mayor's Office. Can you expand about that? Did you work with the Mayor's Office?

Mr. BIGGS. Our staff did. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. OK. Giving you the rest of—

Mr. BIGGS. OK. Thanks. The statement was made that we do not normally get ahead of issues, so I would say, No. 1, we are getting ahead of issues. No. 2, who around here has been around here a little while and has not seen superfluous bills come to the Floor? Now, I am not saying this bill is superfluous. I am just saying that that is not a reason not to support the bill. Third thing is, I will give you an example, because we are amending the Code section which is entitled "activities not constituting doing business," which is why it is worded or framed the way it is. It may not be artful necessarily, but that is—that is why I think it came up the way it was.

But let me give you an example one. If solely maintaining accounts and financial institutions, you are not doing business here, does anybody find issue with that? That that was superfluous? And that is the point I am trying to make, ultimately, is I think it is necessary, and it is clarifying. And I think, you know, and I would offer this to the Ranking Member, if at the conclusion of the day, if this is moving forward, I am happy to sit down and craft more artful language, if that is something that the Ranking Member would like to do. So, with that, I yield back to Mr. Moskowitz.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Moskowitz's time has expired. Any other Member seek recognition? Mr. Mfume? Yes, Mr. Mfume.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to cast all caution to the wind and extend this colloquy just a little longer. But I would like to extend it—I would like to extend it by yielding my time to my Marylander on this Committee, my colleague who is the Ranking Member, so that he might, in fact, have the last word to conclude his position. I yield to Mr. Raskin.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Mfume, for that, and I really have nothing to add. I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from Arizona. I think that we have arrived at substantive agreement on this. I think we probably differ only as to the necessity of passing it at this point, but I am happy to engage in further

discussion with you about that, and I am happy to yield back to the distinguished gentleman from Baltimore.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, all is well that ends well. I yield.

Chairman COMER. Any other Member seek recognition?

[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.

[Chorus of noes.]

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

Now the question is on favorably reporting H.R. 162, 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.]

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes—

Mr. BIGGS. I request a recorded vote, please.

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

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 8690, the Stop Secret Spending Act of 2024. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 8690, the Stop Secret Spending Act of 2024, a bill to amend the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 to ensure that other transaction agreements are reported to *USAspending.gov*, 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. 8690, 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.

I support the Stop Secret Spending Act of 2024, which requires Federal agencies to report complete and accurate information on *USAspending.gov* for how they spend appropriated funds. Since 2006, agencies have been required to be more transparent with how they are spending taxpayer dollars. The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, and later amended by the DATA Act of 2014, established *USAspending.gov*, a public data base of all government spending. This transparency is critical be-

cause it ensures the American people that agencies are using their hard-earned money appropriately.

Unfortunately, over the years, we have found that there are gaps in *USAspending.gov*. Agencies more and more have been utilizing authorities for contracting mechanisms known as other transaction agreements, or OTAs. OTAs are not subject to certain Federal acquisition laws and requirements and, most importantly, are not required to be reported to *USAspending.gov* under current law. The Government Accountability Office has found that agencies use different methods to report the billions in spending related to OTAs. However, it is unknown if they are reporting consistently or if this information is even complete. That means we do not have full transparency over how billions of dollars are spent by Federal agencies. This bill corrects that issue by requiring OTA spending be reported to *USAspending.gov* under DATA Act. The bill also requires agencies to report annually on funds that previously were unreported for a variety of exemptions. Agencies will need to report the amounts and reasons why these appropriated dollars were not reported. This provides more transparency to the public and allows all of us to hold these agencies accountable.

Last, this bill restores the requirement for agency inspectors general to review the entirety of data submitted by *USAspending.gov* to ensure that it is complete and accurate. Transparency does not mean anything if the information is not complete or accurate. This bill will ensure that information will be both, complete and accurate.

I thank representatives, Barry Moore and Jimmy Panetta, for leading this bill in the House of Representatives. I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense bill. I now yield to the Ranking Member.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to Representatives Moore and Panetta for their strong bipartisan work on this bill, and to Senator Ernst for her work on the Senate companion. *USAspending.gov*, the official source of government spending data, is a public data base of Federal agencies' direct expenditures, displaying Federal contract, grant, loan, and other financial assistance awards totaling more than \$25,000. Prime contract recipients are required to report details on their first-tier sub recipient awards. The website is maintained by the Department of Treasury. It provides accurate, consistent, reliable, and searchable data so the public can trace the use of our taxpayer dollars.

However, agency reporting requirements are ambiguous when it comes to reporting so-called other transaction agreements, OTAs, which are legally binding agreements that are considered different from standard Federal contracts and grants. The GAO review found over \$40 billion in agency OTAs from Fiscal Year 2020 through 2022 that were, therefore, not reported on *USAspending.gov*. H.R. 8690 would enact a GAO recommendation to require agencies to include these OTAs in their reports to *USAspending.gov*, taking a big step toward making the public record of Federal spending far more complete. H.R. 8690 would require the Treasury Department to report annually on the total Federal spending on awards for which data has not been posted on *USAspending.gov* as well as the reason such data has not been

posted. It would implement two more GAO recommendations, including requiring Treasury, OMB, and other agencies to ensure that *USAspending.gov* data is complete and accurate, and requiring Treasury and OMB to periodically assess and determine which agencies have to report data to the *USAspending.gov* website.

The public deserves transparency and accountability in how our tax dollars are being spent. This bill would strengthen accountability and transparency and empower *USAspending.gov* to further meet its mission. I encourage all of our colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation. I yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Do any Members seek recognition on 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 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. 8690 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. The Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. I request a roll call, please.

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

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 9040, the Taxpayer Exposure Risk Reduction Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 9040, the Taxpayer Exposure Risk Reduction Act, a bill to require covered agencies to issue strategy and implementation plans for the transfer of credit guarantee and insurance risk to the private sector and to require the implementation of such plans, 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. 9040, 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 now recognize myself for 5 minutes for a statement on the bill.

Currently, the Federal Government manages nearly 148 Federal programs or activities that put Federal agencies at risk of bearing financial losses. Inherently, these financial risks are assumed by the American taxpayer and create uncertainty when budgeting for

dramatic costs arising from unpredictable covered events. Rarely do Federal agencies explore the potential budgetary benefits of shifting some of these costs to the private sector, which specializes in managing these financial risks. As a result, American taxpayers are left suddenly footing the entire cost of activities ranging from managing mortgage financing, to student loans, to crop insurance.

Mr. Donalds' and Mr. Krishnamoorthi's Taxpayer Exposure Risk Reduction Act would direct Federal agencies to assess the budgetary and cost-saving potential of transferring risk to the private sector. Agencies would then publicly report the findings of these assessments. The bill would provide implementation authority for them to do so in instances where such transfers do not increase costs to the Federal Government or program beneficiaries. H.R. 9040 represents a creative, straightforward effort to improve government budgeting and efficiency. I thank the sponsors for introducing the bill—the sponsors, Mr. Donalds and Krishnamoorthi—and I now recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regrettably, I have got to oppose H.R. 9040, the so-called Taxpayer Exposure Risk Reduction Act. This is a staggeringly broad and momentous bill that would make dramatic changes to how Federal agencies manage financial risk, allowing public agencies to transfer credit risk to the private sector. And obviously, the private sector is not doing this on an altruistic, not-for-profit, philanthropic basis. The private sector is only going to be involved if they believe that there is profit to be made in doing this.

Now, Federal risk guarantees exist in a number of areas and agencies, including home mortgages, college student debt, farm business loans, small business loans, and disaster insurance. None of those areas, Mr. Chairman, are within the jurisdiction of this Committee, and we have not had a single hearing on this extremely complicated bill that could have sweeping economic and fiscal consequences, whether or not they are intended. The Federal Government also directly assumes risk in certain insurance programs and Federal pension programs. Making it the policy of the Federal Government to transfer credit guarantee or insurance risk to the private sector is a massive change and raises very complex concerns about this one-size-fits-all, master approach to addressing insurance and government programs.

I want to ask unanimous consent that a letter from a number of concerned groups, including Americans for Financial Reform and the Center for Responsible Lending and others describing their concerns with this legislation, to be entered into the record.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. RASKIN. The authors of the letter argue that this mandate would put Wall Street in the driver's seat in the rollout, access, pricing, and servicing of critical Federal guarantee programs ranging from home mortgage lending to small business and farm loans, and could result in significantly increased costs for taxpayers and diminished or more expensive access to credit for American citizens, families, farms, and small businesses. Transferring credit risk to the private sector does not necessarily minimize the cost of such risk to the taxpayers. The private sector obviously must be compensated to accept the credit risk, and I do not think we know

the first thing about the market of that risk, and we have not looked at historical analogies to doing this. In times of financial recession and stress, I know that private sector guarantors are far more likely to be unable to execute on their credit guarantees than the Federal Government is.

Experience has shown that in times of economic stress, investors far more prefer to deal with the government, and private sector guarantors may simply fail to be able to deliver on credit guarantees. A number of striking examples of this, of course, occurred during the 2007 to 2009 financial crisis.

At the very least, Mr. Chairman, I would say this is a subject that should not be rushed through in some kind of hasty way. We need to have serious hearings about this, along with the committees of substantive jurisdiction over all of the specific questions, like home mortgages, college student debt, small business loans, the farm sector, and so on. So, I am not prepared to gamble on this approach right now, and I would strongly oppose H.R. 9040, the Taxpayer Exposure Risk Reduction Act. And I am happy to yield back to you.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter from the Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers and Reinsurance Association of America, addressed to myself and Mr. Raskin, in support of the Donalds-Krishnamoorthi bill.

Without objection, so ordered.

Do any other Members seek recognition? The Chair recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Mr. Donalds from Florida.

Mr. DONALDS. Thank you, Chairman, for convening this important markup today. I appreciate your leadership in addressing the critical issue of reducing taxpayer exposure to financial risks while maintaining a balanced and effective approach to risk management.

The Taxpayer Exposure Act represents a thoughtful step forward in identifying and mitigating obstacles that place undue financial burdens on taxpayers. This legislation aims to enhance the efficiency and stability of Federal credit guarantee and insurance programs, while transferring risks to the private sector where feasible, ensuring that taxpayers' ultimately benefit. This bill builds upon successful models already in practice, such as FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program, the Federal Housing Finance Agency credit risk transfer programs with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and the Export-Import Bank's initiatives. By requiring Federal agencies to develop and implement robust strategies for transferring risk, we empower these programs to operate more effectively while reducing costs to taxpayers. This legislation strikes the right balance between prudent financial management and the essential support these programs provide to communities and industries nationwide.

I look forward to discussing this proposal and working with my colleagues to advance this important legislation. Again, Chairman, I want to thank you for your dedication to this issue. Additionally, I would like to thank Congressman Krishnamoorthi for his valued work on this bill, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The sponsor of the bill yields back.

Do any other Members seek recognition?

[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 the Chair, the ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to.

The question is now in—

Mr. RASKIN. Can I request a roll call vote on that?

Chairman COMER. Yes. Well, we got one more. Yes, you want to request it on the full bill, right? That was the substitute.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes. OK.

Chairman COMER. OK. Yes. The question is now in favorably reporting H.R. 9040, 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. And recorded vote has been requested by Mr. Raskin. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 10151, the Modernizing Data Practices to Improve Government Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 10151, the Modernizing Data Practices to Improve Government Act, a bill to amend Title 44 United States Code to modernize data practices to improve government, and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill will 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. 10151, 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.

Data is the backbone of modern technologies, like artificial intelligence, which are being used to improve Federal Government processes, save taxpayer dollars, and increase oversight and accountability of Federal agencies. Federal agencies should be encouraged to use these emerging technologies when appropriate and with the necessary safeguards to benefit everyday Americans. However, these tools are only as good as the data that informs them, which is why the Federal Government needs a coordinated effort toward data management and governance.

In 2019, Congress established the Chief Data Officer, or CDO, Council to promote data sharing between agencies and further

data-driven decisionmaking at agencies. Data is not going anywhere. It is increasingly the most valuable asset of organizations across the world. In fact, some have argued that data is the new oil, the most valuable resource on the planet. That is why I am excited to support the Modernizing Data Practices to Improve Government Act which has been brought forward by Representatives Summer Lee and Nancy Mace, as well as Senators Gary Peters and Todd Young.

This bipartisan legislation reauthorizes the Federal Government's leading coordination body on this increasingly valuable resource, the CDO Council. To ensure this is done responsibly, a senior agency official for privacy is added to the Council to make the privacy and security of the American people central to government-wide data policies. In doing so, agencies will be better equipped to establish safeguards that prevent inappropriate disclosure of personally identifiable information in publicly available data.

Data management challenges are not new, but the effects of their failures are more pronounced in the age of AI and emerging technologies. So, we must ensure the Federal Government's use of AI will benefit the American people in a way that fosters public trust and upholds American values. It is necessary to ensure that the data leadership of Federal agencies have a clear role in helping inform the adoptions and responsible use of emerging technologies like AI. The Modernizing Data Practices to Improve Government Act provides this assurance.

Again, I thank Representatives Summer Lee and Nancy Mace for their work on this important issue. I urge my colleagues to support this timely and important piece of legislation. I yield to the Ranking Member for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thanks so much, Mr. Chairman, for bringing this good government bill before the Committee today, and thanks again to Summer Lee and Representative Mace for their leadership. The Foundations for Evidence-Based Policy Making Act of 2018 established the Chief Data Officer Council, or the CDO Council, to improve the way that the Federal Government manages, uses, protects, disseminates, and generates data in our decision-making and operations. Since its inception, the Council has undertaken significant work to ensure that Federal agencies use data to direct, streamline, and to enhance the transparency of government programs and services.

Congresswoman Lee's excellent bill would extend the CDO Council's authorization for 7 years from the date of enactment, ensuring that the work continues. It also updates the Council's purpose and functions to include a direct focus on data governance in order to improve data collection and use, ensure the transparency and quality of public data assets, and better support the reliable and secure use of emerging technology and AI. Additionally, the bill would amend the Council's reporting requirements, directing it to provide a biennial report to Congress and OMB on its progress in establishing the governmentwide best practices for data governance, promoting interagency data sharing agreements, supporting agency use of evidence in policy-making, and improving access to Federal data assets.



Data is a crucial strategic asset, and this bill will help ensure that the Federal Government continues to leverage this asset for the good of the entire public. I am happy to support it, and I encourage all colleagues to do the same. I yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I ask unanimous consent to enter the following letter of support into the record, a letter from Data Foundation in support of the legislation.

Without objection, so ordered.

Do any Members wish to be heard? The Chair recognizes the sponsor of the bill, Ms. Lee from Pennsylvania.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Chairman Comer and Ranking Member Raskin. I am happy to speak today about my legislation, the Modernizing Data Practices to Improve Government Acts, a bill rooted in a simple concept. Our government works best when it makes evidence-based decisions. That starts with having high-quality, reliable data, and the tools to evaluate and use it effectively.

For many, the idea of building a data-driven culture within the Federal Government might sound abstract or unrelated to everyday life, but that could not be further from the truth. Data is not just numbers on a spreadsheet. It is how the Federal Government makes smarter decisions, improves services, and ensures resources reach the people who need them most. It is how agencies anticipate challenges and create policies that reflect the realities of the communities we serve. When our Federal agencies fail to use data and make evidence-backed decisions, we risk making uninformed choices, and that is why the Chief Data Officer Council has been such a critical resource for Federal agencies.

Since its creation in 2018, the CDO Council has helped Federal agencies treat data as a strategic asset and improve how they govern and use it. But as we move forward into the age of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, the stakes and challenges are higher than ever. A 2023 survey from the Data Foundation found that more than 55 percent of Federal chief data officers are already using AI, 95 percent plan to adopt it within the next year, yet nearly half of these CDOs cited the lack of clear guidance as one of the biggest barriers to using AI responsibly.

High-quality data and smart data practices are the foundation of any successful AI system. When Federal agencies use AI responsibly, it can improve efficiency, foster innovation, reduce waste, and better meet the needs of people. But without strong data governance, poor quality data does not just create inefficiencies, it amplifies risk, deepens inequities, and undermines trust in public institutions. As the CDO Council approaches its 2025 sunset date, its role has never been more critical.

The Modernizing Data Practices to Improve Government Act extends the Council's authority for 7 more years, enabling it to continue supporting Federal agencies and establishing the data protections and governance needed for the responsible adoption of AI and other emerging technologies. This bill also requires the CDO Council to report to the Office of Management and Budget and Congress on key data governance challenges, including strategies to mitigate risk posed by emerging technologies, assessments of barriers to

their adoption across agencies, and guidelines for the ethical use of synthetic data.

Additionally, it directs OMB to recommend ways to clarify and enhance the roles of chief data officers, equipping them with the tools, resources, and expertise they need to strengthen Federal data practices and ensure responsible use of AI. At a time when Congress is rightly focused on building up our public AI ecosystem through investments like the CHIPS and Science Act, we cannot overlook the importance of building strong data governance practices to make these technologies work. Without reliable, high-quality data, even the best intentions behind AI tools can fall short. This bill ensures we are not just chasing innovation, but creating the solid foundation needed for innovation to succeed and serve people equitably.

I want to thank the Chairman of Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Gary Peters, and Senator Todd Young for their bipartisan leadership on this issue in the Senate, as well the Subcommittee on Cyber Security, Information Technology, and Government Innovation Chairwoman for her support. I look forward to working with the Committee to advance this bill, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The sponsor of the bill yields back. Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

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

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

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

The question is now on favorably reporting, H.R. 10151, as amended.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed signified by saying no.

[No response.]

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

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Biggs.

Mr. BIGGS. I request a recorded vote, please.

Chairman COMER. A recorded vote has been requested by Mr. Biggs from Arizona. As previously announced, further proceeding on the question will be postponed.

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 8706, the Dismantle DEI Act. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 8706, the Dismantle DEI Act, a bill to ensure equal protection of the law, to prevent racism in 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. 8706, as offered by Mr. Comer of Kentucky.

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

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

The Biden-Harris Administration has forced DEI initiatives into nearly every agency and program within the Federal Government. DEI initiatives destroy morale, decrease recruitment, and potentially violate Federal law. These initiatives spread divisive and exclusive ideologies in our Federal Government workplaces, and taxpayers are left footing the bill. For these reasons, I support the Dismantle DEI Act.

H.R. 8706 aims to repeal the Federal DEI programs across the Federal Government. This bill prohibits funding for such programs and creates a new Civil Rights Act protection against requiring individuals to participate in such programs. The bill will lend legislative support to the incoming Trump Administration's efforts to eradicate the Biden-Harris Administration's entrenchment of leftist DEI policies in the executive branch. I urge my colleagues to support this necessary bill.

I now recognize the Ranking Member for his statement on the bill.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for recognizing me. I strongly oppose the so-called Dismantle DEI Act of 2024, and I confess that I am really baffled as to where it is coming from or what it means. It directly overturns five or six different executive orders by President Biden. I do not have time to go through all of the executive orders that would become road kill under this legislation, but let us just take one of them, which simply says that there should be equity in hiring for people who belong to communities who have traditionally faced systematic denial of equal treatment under the law. And then, illustratively, it identifies disabled people, people who have faced discrimination based on their religion, people who live in rural communities in the country, veterans and military spouses, people from communities of color, individuals from communities that have faced discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, people who face discrimination based on their status as students or not students, people who have limited English proficiency, and pregnant women, as well as people who face discrimination based on older age.

Now look, the Biden-Harris Administration, as you say, has made it a priority to bring in more veterans, military spouses, people living in rural communities, people who are parents, older Americans, people who have faced discrimination, and so on. That is because we are a lot stronger when we include everybody. That is what I understand these efforts are all about. A Federal workforce that actually reflects the diversity of our country makes us stronger, and the largest employer in the United States has a responsibility to lead the way and to model what it means to be open

to everybody. We know of our history where lots of the groups that I just mentioned were, by law or by custom or simply by discrimination, excluded from participation in the Federal workforce. And we know that that has been true of African Americans. We know it has been true of Asian Americans. We know it has been true of Hispanic Americans. There has been discrimination against pregnant women and so on.

So, all these executive orders do is to articulate a policy that is based on Federal law now because it is against the law to discriminate on the basis of all of those different categories that I mentioned. Now that is my first serious objection I have looking at this legislation, which I do not believe we have had a hearing on. Please correct me if I am wrong, but I do not think there has been a hearing on it.

Here is my second major problem with it. It not only says we are going to dismantle any effort that is taking place in every agency and department of the Federal Government to make sure that hiring is taking place consistent with American law and American values, but then it says anybody who was working in one of those offices suddenly becomes ineligible to be rehired or reassigned anywhere else in the Federal Government. I have never seen something like that, I mean, but you know, we can have the policy debate about whether or not it is, you know, good to have an H.R. effort that opens the doors to everybody and consciously tries to do that. But if you decide that you want to do a U-turn on what the Biden-Harris Administration has done, I just do not see how you can turn it into a permanent scarlet letter for people who were assigned to those offices or who went to work in those offices to never get a job again in the Federal Government.

I mean, that is remarkable that it comes very close to being a bill of attainder in the Constitution. I know a bill of attainder applies only to affixing a criminal stigma or penalty to someone. This affixes a professional stigma or penalty, a real scarlet letter to somebody who has just been doing their job. They might have been doing a great job at it, but suddenly we are declaring them a pariah, someone who is in exile from the Federal workforce that they may have given, 5, 10, 15, 18, 20 years to. That just makes no sense, and I would love to have somebody explain the logic of doing that.

Imagine a veteran, say, who is a doctor. I know someone who is a doctor in the VA who then goes to work in a diversity office to make sure that the VA is hiring diverse members from the field of veterans in the country. Well, now we are saying we are going to close down your office, we are going to shut down your operation, we are going to send the message that all efforts toward diversity and inclusion stop, and then we are going to say you cannot go back to be a doctor at the VA hospital, or you cannot get a job even in another agency or department. You cannot go work at the Transportation Department. You cannot go work at HHS. And that, to me, reflects the sloppiness and the recklessness of this legislation, which is an attempt to take an absolute sledgehammer to efforts across the entire Federal Government to promote what I think is an essential American value, which is making sure that the Federal Government itself be open to people from every walk of life

and every American community. And with that, I will yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. I ask unanimous consent to enter the following letter of support for the bill, a letter from Heritage Action in support of the Cloud bill.

I now recognize the sponsor of the bill, Mr. Cloud from Texas.

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Diversity, equity, inclusion are three words that do not necessarily mean what we think they mean. And in spite of the altruistic motives of some of the purveyors of it, diversity, equity, inclusion, as it has been initiated in our Federal Government as an ideology, seeks to categorize individuals based on their immutable characteristics. It is a rejection of the principle that people should be judged on the content of their character and their individual achievement rather than their sex, race, national origin, or ethnicity.

DEI is a huge step backward for our country. It has taken generations, not to mention a Civil War, a Civil Rights Movement, to move past a stain on our Nation's history, but we have made tremendous progress. But to codify discrimination in an effort to remove discrimination is a woeful, woeful initiative, and would undo generations of progress we have made as a Nation on this. Every tear, every drop of blood, the sweat of our founders, our forefathers that have fallen would be in vain for us to continue and to reverse the path that we have. True justice is blind. It should not consider race or sex, and it is the duty of us as lawmakers to write just laws, and it is the duty the executive branch to be just in administering them, without deference to race, creed, religion. Yet the Biden Administration has pushed through DEI initiatives into every policy and government department.

What this bill seeks to do is really three things. It seeks to close the DEI offices that have been set up in virtually every single agency. As well, this Federal Government has pushed these policies and sort of force fed them on the American population by requiring that anyone who does business with the Federal Government, contractors, also have to adhere to these DEI policies, as well as the grant writing process. So, this would right, what may be a well-intended policy, but has done great harm to our country. It has been very divisive.

A new report from Do No Harm counted 500 DEI actions that the Biden Administration took or plan to take. DEI ideology simply does not work and only serves to divide our country. DEI ideology also results in absurd government-funded programs, and it has been a complete waste of taxpayer dollars, and is dangerous as sometimes people who do not have the competencies to carry out the job are placed in jobs for DEI reasons. It is time for us to unwind this bureaucratic initiative and restore a functioning government that does not give preference to race, sex or any of these characteristics. Thank you, Chair, and I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. Will the gentleman yield for a question? Will the author yield for one question?

Mr. CLOUD. Sure.

Mr. RASKIN. I am just curious if you would explain the meaning and import of the provision that would make someone who works

in one of those offices ineligible for rehiring or reassignment in a Federal department or hiring somewhere else——

Mr. CLOUD. They could reapply for another office. What we are not going to do is take an office that has been stood up for the purposes of DEI and mandate that the Federal Government has to somehow find a place for people who have, if they are there, as in their credentials are to be DEI officer, we do not have to find a way to place them somewhere else. These were initiatives that were placed by the Federal Government and—or by the executive actions of the President, and they need to be pushed back on. Thank you, Chair. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. If I could, could I just pursue that for 1 second?

Mr. CLOUD. I yielded back to the Chair.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Do any other Members seek recognition? Ms. Stansbury from New Mexico.

Ms. STANSBURY. All right. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and to the gentleman for bringing this bill before this markup here today. I will have an amendment on the bill later on in the debate.

But, you know, as I say often in this Committee, I am a former Federal employee. I used to work at OMB. One of OMB's jobs is to help manage the Federal workforce. They work very closely with OPM. And we deal a lot with, you know, the regulations and the legal system around Federal employment. And I really want to emphasize the comments that were made by the Ranking Member about how unusual this bill is. You know, we just had a letter introduced into the record from the Heritage Foundation that is supporting this bill because of misguided efforts to essentially stoke segregation, division, and create a victim-oppressor narrative, essentially, is what this letter of support says.

But what is particularly peculiar about this massive bill that has been introduced, and I want to note that the co-sponsor of this bill, or the primary sponsor of this bill, in the Senate is Mr. J.D. Vance, our Vice President-elect. It literally, as the title says, is about dismantling diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in the Federal Government. It revokes executive orders. It amends the Civil Rights Act, and it amends other parts of the Federal code that protect our Federal employees. And then it has this peculiar section that the Ranking Member talked about, which is actually essentially creating lists of Federal employees and contractors that would never be eligible to work for the Federal Government again.

Now we have a word for that in common parlance. We call it blacklisting, and blacklisting comes from the 1950's when, here in this House of Representatives, there was a Committee on American Affairs that was convened under Joe McCarthy. The purpose of that was to purge the Federal Government and to accuse Federal employees and blacklist them from future Federal employment. So, I would like to say welcome to the new House Committee on un-American affairs and to the new McCarthyism, because we have arrived here today with this bill.

Mr. CLOUD. Will the gentlelady yield?

Ms. STANSBURY. So, let us talk about what exactly is——

Mr. CLOUD. Will the gentlelady yield?

Ms. STANSBURY [continuing]. Trying to be accomplished——

Mr. CLOUD. No?

Ms. STANSBURY [continuing]. By this bill and by the upcoming administration, which the Vice President-elect is participating in here. Now, OK, let us take the argument to its logical extension, that this is really about making sure that we have qualified individuals inside the Federal Government. So, my question is, then why is the President-elect choosing absolutely unqualified Cabinet secretaries to be at the head of every single agency? We have got now a worldwide wrestling executive who is going to run Education. We have got a sexual predator who was about to have a bipartisan report released by the House of Representatives to be our AG. We have got a Fox News commentator who is going to run the military for us.

So, if my colleagues across the aisle want to talk about qualifications, they want to talk about efficiency, they want to talk about the Federal workforce, then let us talk about it because you are talking about putting into place leadership in these Federal agencies who are absolutely unqualified, who are dangerous, and know nothing about the agencies that they are about to be appointed to lead. So, this is not about qualifications. This is not about having a qualified Federal workforce. This is about laying the ground for the purge that they plan on January 20 and in the days afterwards.

And we know that because the very organization for whom the Chairman just submitted this letter of support is the Heritage Foundation, who wrote Project 2025, which gave us the blueprint for the purge itself, and what they are planning inside every single one of these agencies. So, we need to be clear-eyed about what this actually is and about what is trying to be accomplished, and why 4 weeks before we are about to adjourn for the holidays, the Republicans are bringing this bill to a markup without an actual hearing.

This is modern McCarthyism. They are preparing for a purge. They are going after members of the Federal Government who are advancing because they are people of color, women, LGBTQ+, other members of our community who have been excluded systematically from participating in Federal service and leadership positions, and then they are going to put their own unqualified loyalists in there to take out our Federal workforce. That is what this bill is about. It is about creating a statutory framework to do that, and we are going to fight it every step of the way. With that I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentelady yields back. Any other Member seek recognition?

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. We will rotate back and forth.

Mr. BIGGS. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Biggs from Arizona is recognized, then we will go back.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. I appreciate the gentelady's statement. I assume that she is referring to Pete Buttigieg or Xavier Becerra or Mr. Mayorkas who were unqualified appointees of the current Administration. I find that interesting, but I also find it interesting because this bill has some interesting things in here. The first section, Section 3, which is 1201, says that you cannot discriminate

for or against any person on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, biological sex, or national origin. You read that to my constituency, and most Americans, I think they are going to say, hey, that is not a bad idea. You cannot require as a condition for employment, as a condition for promotion or advancement, or as a condition for speaking, making a presentation or submitting written materials, that an employee undergo training, education or coursework, or other pedagogy that asserts that a particular race, color, ethnicity, religion, biological sex, or national origin is inherently or systemically superior or inferior, oppressive or oppressed, or privileged or unprivileged.

I do not know. As we look at this, you can either celebrate moving together unitedly as the United States of America, we as a people, where we accept each other and try to move the country forward, or you can say, look, we are going to divide everybody. And that is what has happened under this Administration through the codification—well, they have not been codified, but through these executive orders which are designed to actually separate instead of bring people together. That is a shame. And I respect that we have differences across the aisle on this issue, but I hope that 1 day we really will be a united country, united. And I think this bill is trying to make the point that systemically established, these executive orders have done the exact opposite than that. So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield to the gentleman from Texas if he needs the time.

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you. There was an insinuation that this is McCarthyism, that it creates some sort of list. I would challenge the questioner to find that in the bill text. It is simply not there. The bill says that, “The head of a Federal Agency that closes or terminates or winds up a program or office,” under the paragraph, “shall undertake an appropriate reduction of force.” So, if we have stood up an agency for the purposes of DEI, that we will reduce that force load on our Federal Government for the same amount that was added. It went on to say, “may not transfer, reassign, redesignate any employer/contractor with position or function that is eliminated.” It does not prohibit anyone from reapplying for an office or using their background, their experience in another initiative or area of expertise in our Federal Government. It does not create a list of that employee or ban them from ever participating in government. It just says if we have created an agency for the purposes of DEI, we are going to reduce that office and not have it be a burden on the American people.

If we hired people for the purpose of something that we are not going to be doing anymore—public service, as we all know in our offices, is not a right, it is a privilege, and if there is a need for that office, then great. But being employed for the purposes of something does not automatically guarantee you continued employment in our Federal Government, unless you are meeting a need that provides an ROI to the taxpayer, which this does not.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Who else seeks recognition? Mr. Garcia or Mfume?

Mr. MFUME. Yes.

Chairman COMER. OK. Mfume.



Mr. MFUME. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am going to stand in strong opposition to this, and I look forward to the larger debate, both in the Committee and certainly on the Floor. I just think it is a bad way to go about trying to solve a problem. And, you know, when I look at this, I have to look through the lens of history in terms of how we got here. And so, for me, historically, this really all found its weight in trying to deal with a very real American problem of discrimination and servitude.

For me, this was about a race of people who had suffered, endured, and survived 2 centuries of slavery, oppression, deprivation, degradation, denial, and dis-privilege. And so, the culmination of the act of Congress on July 2, 1964, with President Johnson, was to put in place once and for all the gateway to that opportunity, and so that has put us on a course of evolution. This initially was about Black Americans. That umbrella opened over the years, and it went on to include other defected or affected groups—Latinos, the disabled, gay Americans—and I could go on and on and on.

If this is all about President Biden's executive order, then I would strongly suggest that it ought to be a executive order that countermands that, that goes against it, if that is the goal you are trying to get to. However, stepping and wading into this as the Congress to now amend that 1964 Civil Rights Act sends the wrong message, whether intended or not, to most affected groups. And I can tell you it definitely sends the wrong message to Black people in this country. I do not think that this is going to cure a situation that, quite frankly, has yet to be proven to me that it exists. And so, if we follow the mandates of Project 2025, and if we are reducing force, threatening Federal employees by changing Schedule F requirements, doing other things that put us on a slippery slope, I do not want to be a part of that. I really do not.

And so, I will fight this, and I will ask other Members of this Committee to fight it. Let the incoming Administration do what it wants to do on this, but do not pull the U.S. Congress in to amending the 1964 Civil Rights Act in a way where all of these communities are going to be severely affected down the road. I just think it is bad policy. I do not believe it is insightful. And we are going to debate this over and over and over again because I do not think that too many minds on this side of the aisle are ever going to be changed. There are too many people who are the great grandchildren and great, great grandchildren of a system that worked against them to now see this effort. And I am not impugning the gentleman's integrity by any means. I just think that this is the wrong way to go about doing it. I stand opposed, and I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MFUME. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Mfume. Thank you for your eloquent statement of purpose, which I think describes how we all feel on the Oversight Committee. This is a very sweeping attack on the progress that we have been making as a country to leave behind the legacy of racism and sexism, discrimination against veterans, discrimination against the disabled, discrimination against pregnant women, and so on.

I want to say to the distinguished gentleman whose bill it is, I appreciate the clarification that this is not an attempt to keep peo-

ple who work in such offices ever from being rehired again, so that is a step forward. But I hope he understands that he is treating people who work in these offices completely differently from everybody else in the Federal Government because right now we have several regulations and laws, including one that applies specifically to veterans. So that is the one in my mind, and let me tell you what it says.

If a veteran is working for the Federal Government and the office closes that the person is in, then they have the ability to be reassigned to another office if they are qualified for the job, and if, obviously, the job has got to be legal, you are making jobs, like that exist in a DEI office illegal now. But if there is another lawful position open, these people would not be able to be reassigned to them or be put into them simply because they had worked on diversity before. And that strikes me as a very radical statement, and I do not know anything like it in the civil service or the personal law. And thank you for yielding Mr. Mfume. I yield back.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you, and reclaiming my time. Mr. Chairman, I have got three unanimous consent requests for submission into the record: an official statement from the American Federation of Government Employees, of the AFL-CIO; an official statement from Marc Morial, the President and CEO of the National Urban League; and an official statement of The Human Rights Campaign, all in stark opposition to the bill.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Who else seeks recognition on the bill? Mr. Garcia?

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do agree with the comments that have been said from House Democrats on the Committee. I wanted to say a few things. I think we all want our agencies to serve the American people as efficiently as possible. We want to make sure that our Federal employees are the most qualified and dedicated people to our country and our government. When I was Mayor of Long Beach for the last 8 years, I had a workforce of about 6,000 people, including an incredible police department, firefighters, an efficient port. And one thing that I will tell you that folks in my community value about working in our city was that they were working with diverse personalities, diverse people, folks that they learn from, that they made their work better and vice versa.

And so, we know that inclusive workplaces actually also retain and are ways to recruit top talent. And so, this type of actions and this bill does exactly the opposite of that, and, in fact, I believe we will recruit less qualified individuals when you start removing incentives for diversity and for creativity in the workplace. And clearly, this bill has nothing to do with good government, there is no commonsense, and unfortunately, it is about purging, in my opinion, Donald Trump's enemies. Now, if the Majority wants to make sure that our government runs more efficiently, they should start, and certainly the President-elect should start, by actually appointing qualified people to run these government agencies. I mean the nominees so far has been quite embarrassing as we have heard them from the President-elect. And you have a Fox News personality for Defense Secretary. You have RFK, Jr., who does not believe in vaccines, for Health and Human Services. You have Tulsi

Gabbard, who has praised dictators and, essentially, in my opinion, is a Russian propagandist for our intelligence services. You have Matt Gaetz, who has been accused, credibly, of sexual misconduct and a bunch of other horrific actions.

These are the people, by the way, who the incoming Administration would actually bypass security clearances, FBI tests, yet many of these same managers that are in these current agencies are required to take those same exact tests and exams. And so, I think this is incredibly hypocritical when there are some Members of this Committee who are praising those Agency heads that are going to be coming in who have little scrutiny, and yet they want to remove important programs around diversity, around supporting all people, around uplifting equality within our government. So, I strongly oppose this bill. I think this is moving us completely backward and, quite frankly, violates a lot of the progress that we have made in the civil rights era. And so, with that, Mr. Chairman and our Ranking Member, I yield back.

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I am an original cosponsor to this bill, and I have noted some of the comments here. And I believe we should take a step back and ask ourselves, you know, what do we seek in our republic regarding individual rights, liberties, and freedoms? And do you believe in those core tenets of our republic or not? We have an opportunity before us with this bill to push back against, the Ranking Member mentioned, a sweeping attack. Yes, this is what we have suffered. We have suffered as a Nation, sweeping attack against equality. That is exactly what we are fighting against. Another colleague mentioned oppression and degradation. It is exactly what we are pushing back against. This is a bill that eliminates government-sponsored oppression of individual rights, liberties, and freedoms in the land of the free, freedom of opportunity, not result.

I reflected upon the gentleman's comments, my former colleague, former Representative Gaetz, is not here to defend himself. So, let me speak on his behalf for all Americans accused of any crime at any level. I refer you again to our Constitution. Every American has the right to be recognized as innocent until proven guilty. Representative Gaetz has certainly demonstrated that he is a brilliant litigator, has represented the interest of his district, and his own principles would sometimes vary from mine. He and I have very different opinions about some things. He is a highly qualified and brilliant man, and to attack him with accusations by name in this Committee is wrong. The man is not here to defend himself.

So, I support the bill, Mr. Chairman. It is quite simply a strong response to the oppression of our individual rights, liberties, and freedoms as Americans regardless of color or creed or political affiliation or where you stand upon the economic strata, what your background is, or your heritage. All of us should be counted as Americans equal as we move forward through the course of our life on our journey, and we should not face obstructions that are baked into our government bureaucracies that exclude citizens strictly based upon their color, their heritage, their creed. This removes

those oppressions. Mr. Chairman, I yield to you, good sir, the balance of my time.

Chairman COMER. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CLOUD. First of all, I want to thank you, Mr. Mfume, for realizing we can have different views with the same goal and have altruistic motives on both sides. I just want to thank you. I appreciate that.

Our founding documents talked about having a Nation where we recognize that all people were created equal. Martin Luther King talked about that being a promissory note because as we know, that had not always been the case and has not always been the case in our country, and it took too long and has taken too long for us to get where we need to go, but he also said that we should not use the results of segregation, and I think we could also say discrimination, as the justification for future segregation or discrimination. That is what this bill seeks to do.

It seeks to reverse some of the policies that have instead of looked at merit or qualifications or the like, and institute a policy where you are hired on those things instead of where the first thing we look at is factors about our character, our personality, our skin color, our sex, whatever the case is in qualifications for a job. And I will just point out, there are many examples, but the Air Force's Diversity and Inclusion Resource book has recommendations for unconscious bias, race-specific learning, cognitive diversity teaming, general diversity, and inclusion and belonging, and it includes a book title called "White Rage." This is the kind of things that are going. We should not discriminate at all in our government. This bill supports that, if you read the first title, and we just do not want to go down the path where we have spent decades and literally generations moving away from these sort of discriminatory practices. The idea is not to codify these as we continue to move forward and work toward a more perfect union. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. MFUME. Would you yield? Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. CLOUD. My time is up. It is not my time either, but it is up to the Chair. I would be happy to.

Chairman COMER. Yes. Do you want to yield? Go ahead.

Mr. CLOUD. Yes, sir.

Mr. MFUME. Would the gentleman agree that what this bill does, in essence, is to come up with a new definition for discrimination?

Mr. CLOUD. I do not agree with that.

Mr. MFUME. Well, then if we use the old definition, the bill is way out of line, in my opinion. And the notion about government-sponsored oppression, which my colleague from Louisiana talked about, for me, government-sponsored oppression was the Black codes; for my parents, the Dred Scott decision; the Runaway Slave Act. I mean, that is going hard core to when the government is actually sponsoring oppression. But if we are talking about doing away with diversification initiatives, this is an axe. This is not a knife. It is not pinpoint. It is an axe just to do away with everything under this new discrimination, which leaves a lot of people unprotected, a lot of people out of work, government employees and private sector employees to some extent.

But most of all, it does not solve the problem. It does not deal with the real problem of discrimination, racism, and the things that we have come to abhor and say and pledge that we are all against. This is just so broad that I believe that, as I have said before, I am going to stand in opposition to it, and I can only talk about this from my perspective as a Black man living in America. And I am telling you, it is the wrong thing and the wrong way to do it, and I would strongly suggest, as I said, and I will yield back to the gentleman who was kind enough and the Chair. I really believe that in this instance, the Congress should not be wading in to amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 because of an executive order by a President that you may or may not like. That ought to be undone, I think, by another executive order if you are going to do it that way. But to do this, I just cannot support. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired. Any other Members seek recognition? Ms. Lee? Yes, Ms. Lee, you are recognized.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not in favor of the dismantle diversity, equity, and inclusion act or what it maybe would more aptly be called the dismantling of any semblance of support or opportunity for certain American acts. We know who those Americans are: Americans who have not enjoyed centuries of unfair advantages by keeping others enslaved or segregated, or disenfranchised, or incarcerated, or redlined, or gerrymandered, or excluded by law; Americans who have lived with disabilities or had their relationships criminalized or their gender expression demonized.

If we are being honest here, this bill, which will wipe out every diversity, equity, and inclusion program in our Federal agencies, plus those who contract with us, plus those who receive grant money, plus our schools, is nothing new. This is just the final piece of a decades-long obsession with targeting and dismantling anything that might give marginalized people a fair shot, including DEI programs, which, honestly, started the second the Civil Rights Act passed. Policies like affirmative action and diversity, equity, and inclusion are the closest things we have had to the mythical bootstraps that some of my colleagues insist historically and currently harmed communities need to pick themselves up by.

After centuries of efforts to keep us out of schools and universities from jobs and elected office, Republicans targeting these policies are no accident. Why do predominantly conservative White men believe that the success of a Black person or the opportunity or access of a Black person is an existential threat to them? DEI has not given any unfair advantage that society itself does not already confer on certain Americans. It merely exists to ensure that all other people, that women, minoritized folks, queer folks, disabled folks have the same opportunities to succeed and thrive in our workforce and our schools as people who have not had those opportunities systematically and legally stripped from them do. Is our country not greater when all of us have opportunities to succeed and contribute and survive? Our success and our survival as a Nation is bound together. Diversity, equity, and inclusion programs only exist to band-aid over decades, hell, centuries, of dis-

crimination against people's skin color, their religion, disabilities, gender, or sexual orientations, you name it.

Contrary to Republican conjecture, remedying past discrimination is not, in turn, a discrimination. And we are not going to sit here and pretend racism is over just because one Black person on the Supreme Court agreed that it should be. What DEI does not do is give some kind of magical pass to better jobs, like some of our colleagues are implying. That middle word, "equity," does not mean more than or better than. It means treating people fairly and impartially. It means working to fix generational and systemic discrimination to the betterment of all of us in all of our institutions. But instead, Republicans are trying to bastardize the term, "DEI," to be a slur. When Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson was up for confirmation and when Vice President Harris was added to the ticket, they called them DEI hires. They want you to believe that a Harvard graduate with over 20 years of experience, who happens to be a Black woman, is not qualified, but a Fox News personality is qualified to run the Department of Defense, and a WWE executive is qualified to run the Department of Education.

Let us be real. There is an attempt to create a direct correlation between our race, being a Black person, and our qualifications so much as to say that there is no way to be a Black woman. There is no resume that a Black person could have that would qualify them, unless that Black person is a Republican and there is a quota there. And while all of this has happened at the top level of our government, I can promise you, these same things are happening on every single level of government and private sector. But those people do not have a national platform to speak out against discriminatory treatment.

Where is a Federal worker supposed to turn when another co-worker says a racist comment to them in the break room? Where is the same-sex couple who is denied housing because of their relationship supposed to turn? Where is a pregnant woman who was fired for being pregnant supposed to go? Often the only place that they have to give them recourse are the diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. These folks just want to do their jobs, serving the American people in an environment that feels safe and supports them. Making work a better, safer environment for some does not mean it automatically is worse for others, and those complaining about DEI training are probably the ones who need it the most. My Republican colleagues have got to stop punching down on already marginalized communities and face their own fears of a level playing field privately. It is shameful. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. Any other Members seek recognition? Mr. Burlison from Missouri.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, we just left this room last night listening to a FEMA director who was apologizing for the failures of her Agency, an Agency that, by the way, made its top priority and its focus and mission on diversity, equity, and inclusion. You would think that their mission and goal should be on providing aid and support to the American people in times of disasters. Just months ago, we had another individual sitting at this table during a hearing who was apologizing for the failures of Secret Service because of the events that happened in Butler,

Pennsylvania, a same Agency who made it their No. 1 priority not to protect key individuals. It is not their No. 1 priority. The No. 1 priority is diversity, equity, and inclusion.

And look, I think that what has happened here and what I think that we may not understand is, I think we perceive DEI as a shift from the Civil Rights Act. Instead of discussing equality of opportunity, we are now focused on the equality of outcome. And it is only common sense, it is only logical that you cannot dictate an equality of outcome unless you eliminate the equality of opportunity. This Agency has done that. In my opinion, they have moved on from the Civil Rights Act and moved on toward this equality of outcome, which, in my opinion, is shoehorning some form of Marxism into what is a noble cause, which is to try to root out and eliminate discrimination in the workplace. And so, that is the motivation behind this and that is why I will be supporting it.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields.

Ms. STANSBURY. Does the gentleman yield?

Chairman COMER. Someone asked if—

Ms. STANSBURY. Does the gentleman yield?

Chairman COMER. OK. Ms. Stansbury asked. OK. No. The gentleman's time has expired. Any other Members seek recognition? Yes, Ms. Pressley from Massachusetts.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you. This bill titled the Dismantling DEI Act is an utter disgrace. Having sat and read the text in preparation for today's markup, I have yet another example to tell my constituents about the unserious work of the Republican Party. Now, I will work with anyone serious about progress who wants to center the people who call this country home. This is not it. The Committee on Oversight has the broadest jurisdiction in the entire House of Representatives to investigate any topic it chooses, but we are debating legislation that denies the sky is blue, water is wet, and racism is real.

The major provision of the bill says to ban anything that acknowledges racism, and a few pages later in the exact same bill, there are multiple provisions discussing the presence of racism. This Republican approach is as predictable as it is nonsensical. On one hand, they are saying that racism does not exist. On the other hand, they are saying there is rampant reverse racism. Well, how do you reverse something that never existed in the first place? Riddle me that. While this Republican policy may have a new name, it is the same old tired game.

Look, you all are entitled to your opinions, but not a denial of the facts. Do you all know your history? Do you know American history? The original Constitution counted enslaved individuals as three-fifths of a person. During World War II, the Federal Government forcibly relocated and incarcerated 110,000 Japanese Americans. The FHA practiced redlining in the 1930s and 1960s to deny mortgages to Black Americans, which is why we have a racial wealth gap today. I can go on. The GI Bill, which is supposed to be race-neutral, denied access to Black Americans, denying them equal access to education and housing benefits, which is why we do not have generational wealth. Do not talk to me about merit when those Black servicemen fought for our freedoms.

And I would also just like to take a personal note of privilege to say, please keep Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s name out of your mouths, your perversion of his words and his mission, when his children have asked you to stop invoking his name and perverting his work when he was a proud and unapologetic Black man fighting for equality for Black Americans and all marginalized people.

So, you all are entitled to your opinions, but not a denial of the facts, but I am not surprised that you would deny American history. What I am, though, is committed: committed to speaking truth to power; committed to standing up for marginalized communities and vulnerable people; committed to ensuring that everyone has equal opportunity to buy a house, to work a job, to pursue higher education, and to live in a society that is fair and just. A colleague across the aisle invoked the phrase of, we must do everything to stop government-sponsored oppression. Well, I have just enumerated numerous examples, which is exactly why we have legislation and an executive order to reverse this harm, and that is why I am committed to opposing this bill and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. We will go back—we will rotate sides. The Chair recognizes Mr. Perry from Pennsylvania, then we will recognize Tlaib after that.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield my time, such time as he may consume, to the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. I thank my colleague, and I appreciate my Democrat colleague for exemplifying exactly the kind of oppression of freedoms that we are referencing. How about we will quote whoever we want to quote? How about that is my First Amendment right? That is exactly the kind of baked-in oppression. Like, how dare a White Republican quote Martin Luther King? We actually had a Congressman [sic] say that just now in this Committee.

Ms. PRESSLEY. And I will say it again.

Mr. HIGGINS. And thank you, good lady, for once again exemplifying the type of oppression that we stand against. You know I am right. You know I am right.

Ms. PRESSLEY. [Inaudible].

Chairman COMER. Order, order. Mr. Higgins has the Floor.

Mr. HIGGINS. And we will quote who we please to quote.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Shameful. A disgrace.

Mr. HIGGINS. And we will continue to speak freely because I am a veteran. That is the country that I serve. That is the Constitution I swore an allegiance to, and that oath has no expiration date. I will fight for it with my last life's blood, for my right to speak freely and yours, good lady. You will never hear me saying how dare you quote anybody you please to quote. And that exemplifies, America, precisely the type of institutional oppression that my colleague, Mr. Cloud's bill, for which I am an original co-sponsor, hopes to push back against. I yield my time.

Ms. STANSBURY. But Mr. Higgins, have you read your own bill? Have you read your own bill because it is trying to regulate speech. It is actually regulating speech.

Mr. HIGGINS. I yield my time. The time has been yielded to me and I yield it back to Mr. Perry.



Chairman COMER. Ms. Stansbury, you are out of order. Ms. Stansbury, you are out of order. It is Mr. Perry's time. The Chair recognizes Mr. Perry.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield the balance of the time to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Cloud.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Cloud?

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you, Mr. Perry. I will just say I think this is what makes progress hard on this front, the idea that we cannot have a conversation on government policies that have been put in place. My intent—in my opening remarks, I acknowledged many of the things that have been talked about, the stain on our Nation's history that we have, in some ways, moved past, but there will continue to be work to be done. It is sad and sickening that in a fallen world, in a Nation as diverse as ours, and we are one of the most diverse Nations in the world, there still remain people who cling to old, racist, ignorant ideologies. My concern is that the way this has been implemented into many of the agencies in our Federal Government, this has been listed as the No. 1 agenda in agencies that are supposed to be doing other things.

Yesterday, Mr. Burlison mentioned FEMA, and one of the things is they are trying to weigh someone's religion in how they give out aid. That is crazy. That kind of stuff should not be happening in the United States of America. There is research that has gone into this. Journalist and researcher, Jesse Singal, wrote in the *New York Times* that "there is very little evidence that many of the initiatives work. The specific type of diversity training that is currently in vogue, mandatory training that blames dominant groups for DEI problems, may well have a net negative effect on the outcome managers claim to care about." *Forbes* senior editor, Jena McGregor, wrote, "Compulsory diversity training aimed at people's biases or preventing discrimination behavior appears to actually do more harm than good."

Well, I did not benign the intents or the motivations in these policies, but what we are finding and what businesses are finding now, a number of them have implemented these policies and realizing they are not working. They are not accomplishing the desired ends for us to continue to move toward a more perfect union, and that is why we are seeing a retraction from them. My concern is getting our Federal Government to a place where race, and sexism, and all these things are not the first thing we look at in our hiring, in our grant writing, in our contracting. I think it would make us a better country.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Tlaib from Michigan.

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. You know, I sometimes remind people I grew up in the most beautiful Blackest city in the country, the city of Detroit, because I need you to understand sometimes your lens becomes different when you are in a community just embodied with the constant, I think, struggle—because you will never truly understand what it means to be Black in America. Never. You have to acknowledge that. If you do not, I do not think we will ever be able to pass—you have to know. I believe it in my heart that you do. And this Black pastor told me, I am sitting in the pew. Of course, I am sticking out. And Pastor

Bland, Jr. looks at me in the audience and I just felt like he was just looking at me, but you are a good pastor and you know what you are doing. You always think he is just talking to you. And he said, our country is not divided, it is disconnected.

And when I think about that, I think about the fact that we continue to disconnect because we allow segregation to live and breathe in a way because people are more comfortable that way. You hear people say, well, that is not my fault. I really am a better public servant, a better American, and everything because I went to a beautiful, diverse high school because where I lived, that is the high school you had to go to. We all went to those neighborhood high schools.

There was something beautiful, though, because I went to school with Hungarians, and Polish, and Latinos, and Black folks, and Muslims, I mean, just all different kinds of backgrounds of people from all different likes. And it was something, I think, that many of our neighbors across the country will never, ever really experience, and I think it keeps us divided.

When I think about this bill, I think about not just, obviously, the importance of diversity and inclusion and trying to make sure that our government is reflective of who we serve, but many of the people we hire, it is also their lived experience. Their lived experience is going to have them lead with some sort of compassion that we will never again have similar because we have not lived the life that they have in our country, and I am talking about all different backgrounds. And I just feel like we are in here talking about this in a way that I feel like is just going to continue to divide us, and the acknowledgement that everything is OK, there is no way you have not been in spaces where you hear it. In the Michigan Legislature, Chairman Comer, a man, you know, was a minority witness in the Michigan House and used the “N” word, such a derogatory word. My own state representative was in tears afterwards, thinking of her child, her beautiful, lovely son, adult son, but just thinking, my god, he thought that it was OK that he was somehow emboldened to use that word in the people’s capital in Lansing, Michigan.

We have a lot of work to do. I just think this is not it. We have got to make sure—no, really, we got to make sure that we are putting people in the room, that sometimes we got to make sure they are in the room together because you are not going to come in the room together unless we require it or urge it to happen because we know if we do that, then all the services, the way we move as a Federal Government, will be reflective in a way of leading with that compassion. I think that is needed. I just urge us to please just step back and understand that. And I am not going to tell you, you know, I fully understand, like, because I just know that there is no way you do not know that racism is very clear in these spaces, especially here, in an institution that was not ready for someone like me and sure the heck sometimes is not even ready for the American people, our own neighbors across our country, that will have to be inflicted in coming to get whatever services.

God, it is something beautiful, if they can look at somebody that is reflective of them and understand their lived experience, and I think we are getting farther away from that. And I know you do

not see it, but I am an attorney. I read this. You are going to allow these protections to fall apart when you do this kind of legislation. You know you will. It will allow these protections to fall apart because you are going to allow people to get fired, fired solely because you are dismantling, again, a policy and a process of creating a culture, again, that is reflective of our country. With that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. Any other Member seek recognition? Which one do you want? Crockett or Moskowitz? Frost? I am going by Mr. Raskin.

Mr. RASKIN. Moskowitz.

Chairman COMER. Moskowitz is recognized.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. So, I really have a question for the sponsor. So, I have been sitting and listening and trying to hear your intent, and talking about discrimination, but the problem is that argument falls apart on page 6, line 17 through line 20. And, in fact, if you are sincere about your intent of the bill, what I would tell you is you should delete those lines because actually those lines are actual new discrimination. See, you want to get rid of an office. We may disagree with it, but you can get rid of an office. You want to change policy. We may disagree with the policy you want to change. But here, actually, in those lines, you are creating second-class Federal employees. You are creating new discrimination: "may not transfer"—discrimination. "May not reassign"—discrimination. "May not redesignate any employee"—discrimination. Those are protections that every other Federal employee in every other office in the Federal Government gets. It is a right and a privilege that they get, but you are going to remove that from these people, not an office. Fine, I disagree with it, but it is an office, not a policy. Fine, we disagree with it. It is a policy. This is people now. Now, you are going to the people. You are saying because you worked in an office that we do not think should exist, because you worked there, we are going to remove protections that every other Federal employee gets, but not you, because we disagree with the office you worked in. That is straight-up discrimination.

And so, listen, if you are serious about wanting to change the office and the policy, you should remove those lines because the entire argument falls apart when you want to treat the people who work there completely different than anybody else. And I am happy to yield the rest of my time to the Ranking Member.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you so much, Mr. Moskowitz, and thanks for that powerful statement. That was the thing that jumped out at me when I first read this. This was not just a change in programmatic direction. It was an attempt to strip Federal workers who were doing nothing other than their job, as it was defined to them and described to them, of essential civil service protections that occur to everybody who works in the civil service. And again, there is a general regulation that deals with that. There is one specifically for veterans saying if a veteran is working for an office, say it is one of these offices that closes, that veteran has the opportunity to be reassigned to another job that he or she is qualified for, doing not the same work, but the new work of the new office. And yet this seems to paste a scarlet letter on them, saying you worked in now the politically incorrect, ideologically disapproved office, the reviled

DEI office, and now you are going to have less rights than everybody else in the workforce, you will be fired.

And it does sound like from the author, at least they could reapply. I think it would clearly violate equal protection in the First Amendment for them not even to be allowed to reapply. But why would we set up a two-tier system where there are people who work in the Federal Government and then people who worked in the Federal Government for DEI? And it does, I think, cast a pall over the whole legislation, which obviously is touching, you know, a lot of nerves.

And you know, Mr. Cloud, I respect, you know, the spirit with which you offer this legislation. And I respect the fact that you are not in denial of what so many of our Members want to point out, which is that our history is one that begins, of course, with slavery, and the denial of rights of African Americans in the Dred Scott decision. Chief Justice Taney, unfortunately of Maryland, said that the African American has no rights that the White man is bound to respect. And then, even after the Civil War, we fought a whole war to overthrow the system of White supremacy, to emancipate people from slavery. Still, the Supreme Court said in 1896 in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that it was perfectly OK for government to segregate people according to local racial customs, and we know that that means discrimination and second-class services. So, the legislation you offer is part of a long history and goes back to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act 1965. I will yield back to you, Mr. Moskowitz.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Just reclaiming my time. And so I would want the sponsor to answer that question, because look, if Donald Trump were to create a new agency, right, and years later, if when we get power back, we were to eliminate that agency or eliminate that office, but we then said those people who worked in this area of government that we disagreed with, they are going to get less rights and privileges than every other Federal employee, you would be jumping up and down that we were treating Trump supporters different. And so, what I am saying to you is, if your intent is to change policy and if your intent is to eliminate an office, we may disagree with that, but do not punish the people who work there and treat them different than everybody else and then say this is about trying to change discrimination. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired. I think we go back and forth.

Mr. CLOUD. You want me to answer?

Chairman COMER. If you want to answer the question, feel free.

Mr. CLOUD. Sure. The first thing I would say is, sometimes in Washington, and this is a bipartisan issue, we can tend to think that the American people exist to support the Federal bureaucracy. I do not adhere to that belief. I think the bureaucracy exists to serve the American people. Having said that, we do want our Federal workforce treated right, and properly, and justly. I would point out that this legislation upholds the Civil Rights Act. The first title it goes through and virtually says the same definitions about what discrimination is. The reason and the intent behind that is, and I will give you one example, the Department of Health and Human Services currently has 294 DEI employees, costing the Federal tax-

payer about \$38.7 million in taxpayer funds. Now we can debate whether we think the program or the office has merit. My viewpoint is that for all what the altruistic purposes may have been, as some of the quotes and studies I have read, it is having even an adverse effect at best, or at best it is having a negligent effect and possibly having an adverse effect toward the stated goals.

So, having said that, I am thinking, OK, in the example of HHS, we have a \$38 million office that is actually having an adverse effect and that \$38 million burden should not be on the American taxpayer. That is how my calculus is working. Mr. Garcia, I wish he was here, because he made the comment that we were trying to get rid of DEI officers because we were going after Mr. Trump's enemies. His words, not mine. I did not view DEI officers as Mr. Trump's enemies. That was a new idea to me, a new concept that, apparently, he thinks that DEI officers are Mr. Trump's enemy. I think that would be an issue if they were. I did not think that they were. But having said that, you know, if you wanted to offer an amendment and that would help you get to support of this bill, if you thought that would make the difference, I—

Mr. RASKIN. That is the first amendment coming. That is my amendment.

Mr. CLOUD. OK.

Mr. RASKIN. So, we can get there.

Mr. CLOUD. And if it passes, will you vote for it?

Mr. RASKIN. But I am definitely voting for the amendment. I am introducing the amendment itself.

Mr. CLOUD. I mean, for the bill?

Mr. RASKIN. Oh, well, I have to look and see what happens to your bill. There are more amendments coming.

Chairman COMER. OK. Ms. Crockett, she is next.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Chairman COMER. OK. Ms. Crockett.

Ms. CROCKETT. So, many of you know that I practice law, but some of you do not realize that I actually was a business major out of Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee and the emphasis that I got in my business degree was on finance. And as I traveled the country campaigning this election cycle, one of the things that I talked about was this idea that in finance, we always promote this idea of diversity. If you know anything about a portfolio, the one thing that you want to do is make sure that it is as diverse as possible because at times, certain stocks will perform better than others and they will exemplify various strengths and weaknesses, and together, a diverse portfolio is usually what any good finance person would promote. They would not promote that you solely invest in vanilla wafers believing that that is going to be the strongest portfolio, but instead, they may want to add some chocolate cake and some Twinkies into the mix to make sure that we have the best portfolio because there will be different preferences by different people and again, there will be different strengths.

But as I sit here and I think about what we say, and what I am hearing as it relates to diversity when it comes to anything outside of making money, and to be clear, we are losing GDP every time we try to push back on this idea of diversity because all of us bring something different to the table. But you consistently said over and

over the word “oppression,” and every time that you said it, it was almost as if I was hearing nails on a chalkboard because it seems like you do not understand the definition of “oppression,” and I would ask you to just refer to Google to help you out. Oppression is the prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or control. That is the definition of “oppression.”

And so, as I sit here as a Black woman who practiced civil rights, let me tell you, the reason that my colleagues wanted to make sure you understood the same Black history that your side of the aisle wants to delete out of classrooms is because you can then misuse words like “oppression.” There has been no oppression for the White man in this country. You tell me which White men were dragged out of their homes. You tell me which one of them got dragged all the way across an ocean and told that you are going to go and work, we are going to steal your wives, we are going to rape your wife. That did not happen. That is oppression. We did not ask to be here. We are not the same migrants that you all constantly come up against. We did not run away from home. We were stolen.

So, yes, we are going to sit here and be offended when you want to sit here and act like, and do not let it escape you that it is White men on this side of the aisle telling us people of color on this side of the aisle that you all are the ones being oppressed, that you all are the ones that are being harmed. That is not the definition of “oppression.” You tell me the prolonged, cruel, or unjust treatment that you have had, and we can have a conversation.

Mr. HIGGINS. You can start with Exodus.

Ms. CROCKETT. The final thing that I will say on this particular issue, two things. There is an article from *The Guardian* and it is a little old. It is from 2021, so I apologize, but it said that back then, just 3 years ago, White men represent 30 percent of the population, but 62 percent of office holders. These are the issues that we are constantly looking at and recognizing and trying to say is this just. I cannot even tell you how many White men have served in this chamber, but I can tell you that I am only the 55th Black woman to be elected to Congress. And so, when you want to talk about history and pretend as if it was so long ago, it was not, because, again, I am just number 55.

Finally, when we started to talk about what do these numbers do, as we are trying to say, the diversity, equity, inclusion is the problem, the reality is that when it comes to financial performance, companies with more diverse workforces are more likely to outperform their competitors. Companies in the top quartile for racial diversity are 35 percent more likely to outperform their peers on profitability. Companies with diverse executive teams are 25 percent more likely to generate greater profits. Diverse companies earn 2.5 times higher cash-flow per employee. Diversity works, and until you can show me data that says otherwise, I think that we need to go back to being a country that listens to experts and gets out of our feelings and recognizes, again, that racism is real in this country. And until we stop pretending that it is not, we will not solve the problems that we are consistently facing and that will bring real unity that we seek when we are looking for a more perfect union.

Chairman COMER. Does any other Member seek recognition? Seeing not—for what purpose does the Ranking Member seek recognition?

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

Mr. BIGGS. I reserve a point of order.

Chairman COMER. State your point?

Mr. BIGGS. I will reserve a point of order.

Chairman COMER. OK. Yes. The Clerk will distribute the amendment to all Members. The Committee will suspend while we distribute the amendment.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The CLERK. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8706, as offered by Mr. Raskin of Maryland.

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

I reserve a point of order. The Ranking Member is recognized for 5 minutes to explain his amendment.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. This has been an edifying, if often heated, conversation we are having today, and I think it is actually befitting the First Amendment and the Speech and Debate Clause. We are the world's greatest multiracial, multiethnic, multireligious constitutional democracy, and it is not easy. The far more common destiny for countries with different ethnic and racial groups is one of tribal violence and racial apartheid and ceaseless ethnic conflict, so we are getting there, and then we have different approaches to how to do it.

Some of our colleagues have somewhat dabbled in the language of race silence now, not talking about the past, not talking about what we have gone through, and everything will be all right. Well, that was definitely not the position of the Radical Republicans who led us through the Civil War and the Reconstruction period. They passed all kinds of race-conscious legislation in the Reconstruction period. They passed the Freedmen's Bureau with the explicit provision of resources for the purposes of transfer to the recently emancipated Black population. The Radical Republicans led Congress in passing legislation to establish schools for Black people, not integrated schools, but schools for Black children, explicitly race conscious, because they understood that the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment and equal protection and the Reconstruction legislation was not just to create some sterile notion of color blindness, which was not in the Fourteenth Amendment or any of the debates about it. It was to actually help people get up after centuries of oppression, as my colleagues have described it, after centuries of violence and dispossession, and legalized slavery, and subjugation, and control.

So, we have a difference now, I think, substantively about whether it is best to deliberately and consciously open government up and not just to Black people and Latino people, but open it up to other people who have been traditionally left out, including veterans, including people in rural areas. Your legislation would overturn all the executive orders that deliberately try to get the government just to think about getting applicants in the door who come from traditionally disfavored and discriminated against commu-

nities, but we understand, all right, we have got an honest difference of opinion about that.

But I want to go back to what Mr. Moskowitz was saying, which is, even if we disagree about the validity or the utility of these programs, and we think that they have been very successful in terms of opening the government up to the whole country and being very effective and productive for America. But even if we disagree about that and we are going to change the program, this language is intolerable, which says that people who have worked in those programs have lesser rights than anybody else who has worked for the people of the United States in our Federal Government.

So, my amendment would lift the bill's egregious ban on transferring, redesignating, or reassigning employees who work in one of these offices that gets eliminated by the bill. In other words, if we eliminate this language, we treat them like any other Federal worker whose job has been eliminated by virtue of Federal action. So, I think that that sends a far better statement about the motivations and the purposes of this legislation, and I think this is one that everybody should be able to agree to. And with that, I submit it to the wisdom of the Committee. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I recognize myself to speak on the amendment.

I oppose the amendment. The amendment seeks to increase bloat in the Federal workforce. It does this by preventing the dismissal of employees whose offices, functions, and positions are eliminated by the bill. The Federal workforce is already massively oversized. We should be doing everything possible to reduce the size of the Federal workforce, not to keep it filled with unnecessary employees, as the amendment seeks to do. And of course, nothing in the bill precludes dismissed employees from reapplying for a job elsewhere in the Federal Government. This was an issue in the Presidential race, reducing the size of the Federal Government. The overall bill eliminates taxpayer funding for Federal offices, programs, and grants affiliated with DEI. It is already Federal law to discriminate against anyone based on their race, and the President-elect was transparent in saying this is one of the specific areas where they were going to seek to cut waste in the Federal Government. We cannot continue to spend \$1.5 trillion a year, more than we take in, and I think that the President-elect was transparent.

I feel like this issue was talked about, with all due respect to the Democrat nominee, Vice President Harris. I do not know a lot of specific things she was going to do as President. I do not think she articulated very many specific proposals. One of the proposals that President Trump talked about was eliminating all the unnecessary DEI, and we have talked about how many positions have been created over the last 4 years. Instead of fighting for bureaucratic jobs, I believe—I represent a poor area, and obviously they are poor minority districts. We should be fighting for investment, fighting for entrepreneurship, fighting for ways that we can lift up communities that have been impacted by poverty, like many of the communities I represent, many of the communities that are represented by minority Members. We can do this, and I think that is what the American people want. The government is not the answer. The private sector is the answer. We need to be more efficient in govern-



ment, and we are going to be more efficient in government. That is the mandate of the American people.

So, I oppose the amendment. I support the bill. And now I see, Mr. Moskowitz, you seek recognition?

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, listen, I have agreement with my colleagues across the aisle on wanting to shrink bureaucracy, wanting to decrease the size of Federal Government. That is a valid point. I think DOGE is going to try to do that, right, and you are seeing Democrats come out and support that. Senator Coons did that the other day. What this amendment is saying is it is not allowing the Federal Government to stay the same size, but what we are saying is, as you eliminate an office, as you change a policy, if there are jobs available that they can transfer to, just like every other Federal employee, then they should be able to do that. What you are doing is that Federal employees have certain protections and rights that they get. And what you are saying is the Federal employees that worked in this office are not going to get those rights. All these people are not going to get to stay, right? They are not all going to get to stay.

That is not what this amendment is doing. This amendment is not saying, OK, yes, change the policy, eliminate the office, but then let everybody stay somewhere else. That is not what the amendment is doing. What the amendment is doing is saying they have certain protections, certain rights, as every other Federal employee and every other office. And what you are saying is, because you worked there, you are not going to get those protections. I am telling you, it is very dangerous, and I can guarantee you the favor will be returned because that is how this place works, right? You did not like the other day that Trump houses were skipped in FEMA. I agree with you. It was unacceptable. They were specifically given less rights and privileges and available Federal help because they supported the President. If Trump creates an office that later gets removed, those people who worked in that office should not get less protection, they should not, but that is what you are now saying. You are now saying where we have political differences and policy differences, if you work in that office of political difference and policy difference, you are not going to be treated like every other Federal employee.

So, it is not about keeping the Federal Government the same size. Do not mix the message here because I am with you on that, but I really think you should take the Ranking Member's amendment. It really does not change your bill. It just does not allow a new precedent to be started that we are creating different classes of Federal employees.

Mr. HIGGINS. Will the gentleman yield for a brief response?

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Sure.

Mr. HIGGINS. It is your time, correct?

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. It is.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you. I thank the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Moskowitz. He made valid points earlier. He makes valid points now. And having read the sections and sentence that Mr. Moskowitz has referenced very specifically on page 6, paragraph 2 says no reassignment. The head of a Federal Agency that closes, terminates, and winds up a program or office under Paragraph 1,

then in the Subparagraphs A and B, Subparagraph B says, “may not transfer, reassign, or redesignate any employee or contractor with the position or function that is eliminated by operation of this subsection.” I believe that the gentleman is stating that if you close down a DEI Department and you have a qualified employee that would like to transfer to the Construction Supervision Department, that that executive authority within that bureaucracy should be able to transfer that person from the DEI Department to the other department. Is that correct?

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. If that job were available.

Mr. HIGGINS. If that job was available, yes.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. That would be a right that every other Federal employee would have.

Mr. HIGGINS. I confer with that concept, but the Ranking Member’s amendment is far more broad. So, I am going to oppose the ranking member’s amendment because it eliminates the entire Section of 101, but if you were to offer an amendment specifically what we are just describing, I would support that amendment. I yield.

Chairman COMER. Everybody yields back? Any other Members seek recognition? Mr. Cloud? Well, we moved to Mr. Moskowitz, now Mr. Cloud. OK. Ms. Stansbury.

Ms. STANSBURY. All right. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I want to rise in support of the amendment and reiterate but also explicate a little bit on this concept. So, you know, you learn a lot about a bill not only by what it says, but by what it does not say. So, if the explicit purpose of this bill, like, we are just going to take your logical argument here, is to do away with these DEI offices which you believe are not necessary, which obviously we disagree with on the premise, then why not just be silent about what happens to Federal employees that are involved in these offices? But the bill is not silent about them. The bill includes these phrases that the Ranking Member’s amendment is striking because, literally, the bill has punitive outcomes for employees that work in these offices, and that is what this amendment is trying to strike, is the punitive measures that are put into place.

I know that we have already read pieces of this, but one of the sections that it would strike says “no reassignment,” so the heads of a Federal Agency that closes, terminates, blah, blah, blah, may not transfer, reassign, or redesignate an employee or contractor. So, if this was just, like, OK, we are going to shut these offices down, there is no reason to have punitive language to the employees that would work in these offices, but it does not just state it once. It states it twice in the bill. And that is why we are invoking McCarthyism, these blacklists, like, these are folks who are being penalized for working in offices that deal with anything doing with diversity and, like, helping work with our Federal workforce to address these issues. So, that is what the amendment is trying to achieve.

I also want to just take a moment while we are on this topic is, almost all of the discussion today has been about the first several sections of the bill and, basically, the Federal workforce. But if the stated purpose of this bill was really just about, like, oh, we are going to, you know, change the way the Federal Government does its DEI stuff, then why on earth does this bill includes sections at

the end that is tinkering with the entire financial sector? This bill has language in it that says that publicly traded companies on the stock market cannot use diversity as a measure of their boards, and it also says that stock brokers and licensed folks who work in our financial system cannot engage with that. In addition to that, there are multiple sections in this bill that prohibit Federal funding, whether it is grant money or it is money that would go to Federal contractors who even discuss diversity. So, there were some comments made here a moment ago about, you know, we need to fight to defend free speech. This bill is literally trying to regulate the free speech of the free market, private companies, the financial sector, nonprofits, and our Federal agencies.

So, I appreciate the intent of trying to maybe make the Federal workforce more streamlined, if I was to give the benefit of the doubt to this, but, like, this is a wholesale effort to basically do away with every initiative that has made it possible for women, people of color, and LGBTQ people to participate in the Federal Government, our financial sector, the military, nonprofits, and in the services that our Federal Government provides. So, I find it laughable that we would even entertain the premise of it. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Thank you. Thank you for yielding. I am just going to go back to my point and conversation with Representative Higgins, what the Ranking Member's amendment does is that language that we just discussed, that identical language appears 3 times in the bill. It is not just there once. I pointed it out once, but it is there verbatim 3 times. So, it just eliminates the identical language in the three places it is in the bill.

Mr. HIGGINS. It is five sections.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Yes, no, it is five, sorry. It is in the bill 5 times. I stand corrected. It is in the bill 5 times, but it eliminates the identical language, and let me just again go back. You guys won the White House. You are going to be in charge of this. You are going to be the one deciding if they get to transfer to a job. It is going to be Trump people who will get to approve that. All we are saying is, do not make them second-class Federal employees. Do not create a new subset of Federal-class employee. That is what we are saying to you. Your bill is going to move out of this Committee, but this is a weakness in your bill.

Chairman COMER. Any other Member seek recognition?

Ms. STANSBURY. I yield back.

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. Mr. Cloud.

Mr. CLOUD. First of all, I just wanted to thank the Ranking Member for your kind and generous acknowledgement of history and what Republicans have done in the past to work on this issue. I had thought to bring that up, because there have been allegations like we would not want history taught in schools. I would actually want all of history taught in schools. You know, I do not view this as—I realize it has political undertones. I think this is an issue of the human condition and heart that needs to be addressed more than a political one, although I am not ambivalent to the political undertones here. But anyway, in an effort to not raise the tempera-

ture, I had not brought that up, but I appreciate you bringing that up and acknowledging that.

I also appreciate the intent in what you are stating on the Federal workforce. I would be happy to work with you on that. I do think that this amendment goes beyond that on the reassignment provision. If this were, for example, to be the last line of this amendment, strike Section 502(a)(2), that would be something I could support. But in its current state, and, again, we did not get an advanced copy of this, so we are dissecting this live, but it seems to also prohibit the reduction in force, which if we have agencies, if we have workforce, that, again, are not required by the American people. I do not think that Federal workforce should be discriminated because they worked in a certain Agency. In the same way, I do not think that the American people, who, while I appreciate the Federal Government, my first allegiance is always going to be to the American people. I do not think the Federal or the American people should have to have the burden of hiring and funding someone just for the sake of them getting preference in priority in transferring. So, if we could limit it to that, you know, I could accept that or I would be happy to work with you, but in its current state, I would have to oppose the amendment.

Mr. RASKIN. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. CLOUD. Yes, sir.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you kindly for the offer. I see what you mean about the language about closing and terminating and undertaking appropriate reduction in force. Of course, if that language is gone, still the whole operative meaning of the bill is to close the program and the office, but, you know, that language that could presumably be, you know, preserved or put someplace else. But what we are talking about is just the impact on Federal workers who have done nothing wrong other than their jobs. Presumably, if they did something wrong, they could be terminated for those reasons. But those people, they are not guaranteed a job, but they should have the same opportunities as other Federal workers potentially to be transferred or, you know, reassigned to another lawful purpose. What you are creating here with the legislation is a statement this is no longer a lawful purpose to be engaged in various activities you have enumerated. So, I am happy to work with you on that. You know, I do not think it is necessary to say that the workforce can be reduced because, obviously, it will be if the program is closed, but no problem there. Happy to yield back.

Chairman COMER. Any other Member seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is on the amendment offered by Mr. Raskin from Maryland.

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 and the amendment is not agreed to.

The question is now—

Mr. RASKIN. Can I just seek a roll call vote on that, Mr. Chairman?

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

Do any other Members wish to speak? Ms. Pressley.

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

Chairman COMER. The Clerk will distribute the amendment to all Members. We will pause so that Members have a chance to read the amendment.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The CLERK. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8706, as offered by Ms. Pressley of Massachusetts.

Mr. BIGGS. I reserve a point of order.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman from Arizona reserves a point of order.

Without objection, the amendment is considered as read.

Chairman COMER. Ms. Pressley from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PRESSLEY. My amendment is straightforward, Mr. Chair. The text of it reads, "On page 30, line 22, Application to HBCUs, nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the maintenance and funding of historically Black colleges and universities." This amendment would exempt HBCUs from the Federal ban that this bill places on funding for institutions that acknowledge racial oppression. As everyone on this Committee can read, this bill prohibits funding for DEI practices and it defines prohibited DEI practices very broadly, including banning the acknowledgement of racial oppression. Thus, for Title IV of this bill, it bans any organization that recognizes racial oppression from receiving grant funding. This has a direct impact on our Nation's HBCUs.

HBCUs were founded to provide higher education opportunities to Black Americans who were denied access due to slavery and segregation and systemic racism. These institutions are pillars of resilience, history, and excellence. Many of our congressional aides and, in fact, our congressional colleagues are graduates from HBCUs. HBCUs enroll and graduate a diverse student population, including first-generation college students and those from low-income families. While they make up only 3 percent of colleges and universities, they produce nearly 20 percent of all Black graduates, and they accomplish this feat despite chronic underfunding.

This Republican bill, the Dismantle DEI Act, would result in HBCUs being banned from receiving Federal grant funding. HBCU professors, researchers, and students would be cutoff if this bill passes as it is currently written. That is why my amendment is necessary to protect HBCUs. I would also like to add that some of the oldest HBCUs are in Cheyney and Lincoln in Pennsylvania, Wilberforce in Ohio, and UDC right here in the District of Columbia. Each of them was first created before the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation. Further, several of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have HBCUs in their home states, including Chairman Comer and many of those serving on this Committee. There are HBCUs in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. All stand to be harmed by this legisla-

tion. But it is not just the schools who will suffer. It is the professors who teach at them, the students who enroll, the community members who live near them, and the entire country that benefits from HBCU success.

Finally, when it comes to our bottom line, HBCUs generate \$16.5 billion into direct national impact across the country. If they were a company, they would be placed in the top 50 of Fortune 500 companies when it comes to job creation, and that is why this amendment is necessary to protect our HBCUs, and I urge my colleagues to support them through this amendment. I yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. I will recognize myself. The Chair recognizes Mr. Cloud to speak on the amendment.

Mr. CLOUD. I have no opposition to this, and as a former member of the Ag Committee, I have supported funding for this, and so I do not see an issue with this amendment.

Chairman COMER. OK. Any other Members seek recognition?

Ms. PRESSLEY. Yes, I would like to request yeas and nays, and thank you.

Chairman COMER. OK. Any other Members seek recognition? Seeing none, the question is now on the amendment offered by Ms. Pressley.

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.

Ms. PRESSLEY. I request the—a point of order.

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

For what purpose does the gentlelady from Massachusetts seek recognition?

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

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman, I reserve a point of order, sir.

Chairman COMER. A point of order is reserved by Mr. Higgins. We are distributing the amendment.

Ms. PRESSLEY. OK. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Yes. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The CLERK. The second amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8706, as offered by Ms. Pressley of Massachusetts.

Chairman COMER. The amendment is considered read.

I now recognize Ms. Pressley.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Chairman, my amendment seeks to ensure that this legislation does not erase or ignore the undeniable history of systemic racism in our country. It adds a section to the top of the bill that is a straightforward acknowledgment that “the Federal Government has implemented policies that perpetuate systemic racism.” Systemic racism refers to a network of public policies, institutional practices, cultural norms, and social structures that

work together to maintain racial inequities. This is not a matter of opinion. It is a matter of fact that originates in the founding of this Nation and its implications to this very day.

Our government has been deeply intertwined with this system from enshrining slavery and the three-fifths compromise into United States Constitution to implementing redlining, segregation, and other discriminatory policies based on race. No, I know that talking about the existence of racism in America makes some uncomfortable, but remember, this is a bill that you all brought up. So, to my colleagues, let me just say that acknowledging these truths is not an act of blame. It is an act of responsibility. We must take responsibility. If you are serious about ending reverse racism, you need to acknowledge that it exists in the first place, and that means voting in favor of this amendment.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. I will recognize myself. I oppose the amendment which adds a rule of construction to the bill's amendment to the Civil Rights Act to state that nothing in the bill should be interpreted as denying that the Federal Government has implemented policies that perpetuate systematic racism. Nothing in the bill speaks to the issue. Therefore, no rule of construction is necessary. I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment.

Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is on the Amendment Number 2, offered by Ms. Presley.

All those in favor—

Ms. PRESSLEY. I am sorry, can I be recognized?

Chairman COMER. Are you seeking recognition, Ms. Pressley?

Ms. PRESSLEY. Yes. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. I thought we had already recognized you to speak. Can you yield? Can somebody yield Ms. Pressley time? Mr. Mfume?

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Chairman, yes, I would yield time to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Mfume yields his time to Ms. Pressley.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you. Ignoring systemic racism will not make it go away. By supporting this amendment, Congress can acknowledge a truth and set us on a path to fairness, justice, and progress for all. If Republicans are genuinely interested in denying racism exists against Black people, indigenous people, and all people of color, it is a reflection of your values and explains the policies they put forth, including this bill. Now, we acknowledge that progress has been made. The progress is real and worth celebrating, but that does not mean that our work is done. Recognizing injustices and their impacts is essential to building on their progress and ensuring that it lasts. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. Any further discussion? Seeing none—yes?

Ms. BROWN. I just want a point of clarification here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This bill is being proposed to address reverse racism, yet we are not willing to acknowledge racism.

Chairman COMER. Just a point? What are you doing here?

Ms. BROWN. I am asking for clarification. If the bill or the amendment that Ms. Pressley is proposing suggests that we just simply acknowledge that racism exists and the fundamental point of your legislation is to deal with reverse racism, then I should ask you, what are we doing here?

Chairman COMER. I would assume you are asking Ms. Pressley the question?

Ms. BROWN. No, I am asking you.

Chairman COMER. You might as well ask Ms. Pressley the question.

Ms. BROWN. Well, maybe I should ask the author of this legislation. Mr. Cloud?

Mr. CLOUD. Yes, ma'am, I apologize. I was reading.

Ms. BROWN. OK. Just trying to get clarity here. If we cannot agree that racism exists, but this legislation you are proposing is to deal with reverse racism, why are we here?

Mr. CLOUD. I think you answered the question in your question.

Ms. BROWN. I do not think I did. Reverse racism. Racism is included in the language, yet you do not want to acknowledge that racism exists, which is simply Ms. Pressley's request here.

Mr. CLOUD. We have discussed that over and over. There has been no denouncement or statement that racism does not exist. We have talked about the fact that it indeed does and it is a horrible condition of the human heart of some people, that that still does exist.

Ms. BROWN. So, you are supportive of Ms. Pressley's amendment then? It sounds like you are.

Mr. CLOUD. This rule of construction that is, by the way, being given to us at the last minute, one, us coming through figuring out what the intended consequences are, as these were not submitted in advance, as my bill was, is one of the challenges. There is no legal definition of what systemic racism is. I think we would want to talk about what government, what policies, and all those sort of things, so this is a pretty broad statement that I am not sure I could support in the time I have to look at this.

Ms. BROWN. I will yield to Ms. Pressley.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you to the gentlelady from Ohio. This bill is all about racism, which is exactly why my amendment is relevant, and the congressional record needs a clear vote on my amendment so that the American people will know where Members of this Committee stand on this issue. For all people who know racism exists and want to end it, I urge you to vote yes. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members seek recognition? Seeing none—

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman, setting aside the rule of construction in an interest for transparent and candid response to my colleague's query, the amendment is poorly written. It uses past tense and current tense in the same subject matter without indicating a shift in time. You are not just saying a statement that we acknowledge that racism is a part of human nature and exists as part of the human construct. Of course, corruption is born of the heart of man, not the mechanisms of man. We here, every one of us, would



recognize that racism exists throughout human history, in every culture, in every land. The sun never sets, nor has it, on some manifestation of racism throughout the history of man. Yes, there you go, statement in Oversight Committee, part of the historical record now. But the good lady has introduced an amendment which I oppose because it is very poorly written, and it is quite condemning of the American people and American society. What her amendment is saying, is that prior acts of our Nation and our forefathers before us have perpetuated systemic racism that currently exists in our country. You are asking us to say that America is systematically racist, and that is not the same as saying that just admit that racism exists, which is what you are stating when you discuss this, but in writ, it is quite different. So, I oppose the amendment. I appreciate the effort, but no.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members seek recognition? Mr. Raskin.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a fascinating colloquy now, and I wanted to just suggest one thought for Mr. Higgins. I actually think this is a very well-written amendment. It says "nothing in this act shall be construed to deny that the Federal Government has implemented policies that perpetuate systemic racism." And I will give you one good example, Mr. Higgins, I think—

Mr. HIGGINS. It does not say has implemented policies that have perpetuated systemic racism, nor does it say has implemented policies that have perpetuated racism. It identifies systemic racism and does not refer to the past tense versus the current.

Mr. RASKIN. I am happy to have inaudibly yielded to you on that point, but let me just reclaim my time for one sec because I want to suggest a really excellent book for people who are interested in just this question of how the Federal Government itself has implemented policies that indeed perpetuate in the present tense, systemic racism. The book is called, "The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America," and it is about Federal housing policy and the FHA and veterans' policy, all of which deliberately segregated America and deliberately gave certain kinds of benefits to Whites that were not available to Blacks, and then deliberately and consciously redlined areas.

And I read it, I think, about, I do not know, 6 or 7 years ago, so forgive me for not being able to detail more precisely what it is talking about. But the author, Richard Rothstein, explains how Federal housing policies in the 1940's and 1950's explicitly mandated segregation and destroyed the capacity of African-American families to be in integrated neighborhoods and of White families to be in integrated neighborhoods. That was a deliberate policy.

So, I mean, it would be nice to believe that when the Thirteenth Amendment was adopted and slavery was abolished and the Fourteenth Amendment was passed, that everything was OK. There was an effort in the Reconstruction, and again, with the radical Republicans' efforts, to transfer resources to the recently freed population to lift people up who had been downtrodden by law for centuries, but then Reconstruction was undone. And we got into Jim Crow and poll taxes, literacy tests, grandfather clauses, and the whole system of inequality in the law, which lasted at least up

until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, but it did not end there either. And so, there is a real history to it, and I think that is what makes all of these issues so difficult.

And I know that there is a theory which is, well, let us not focus on it, let us wave a magic wand and say, everything is OK as opposed to continuing to engage in inclusive and open efforts to redress the injuries of the past and to move forward. And look, I agree with people who think that bureaucracies are awkward. All bureaucracies are awkward. There is no doubt about that. Everybody finds bureaucracy awkward, but the process we have been going through as a country is far better than what we have seen in other places in the world, like racial stratification and violence and tribal violence and apartheid, and all of those things. So, this is what we get in the greatest multiracial, multicultural, multi-ethnic constitutional democracy, efforts to be conscious of the past and to move forward. So, I like Ms. Pressley's amendment. I think it is actually very well worded, and I definitely plan to vote for it, and I am happy to yield, and I will yield to the author of the amendment.

Ms. PRESSLEY. To my colleagues, let me just reiterate again that acknowledging these truths is not an act of blame. This is not a blame amendment. It is just simply an act of responsibility. So, let us take the responsibility.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none—

Ms. STANSBURY. Sorry. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. Yes. Have you already been recognized, Ms. Stansbury, on this amendment?

Ms. STANSBURY. Not on this one, no, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. OK. I recognize Ms. Stansbury for 5 minutes.

Ms. STANSBURY. Thank you. I do not want to beat a dead horse, but I do have to say that I could not have imagined that I would be debating the existence of racism this morning. I did not have that on my Bingo card. But I just want to point out the irony of the debate that we are having right now because there has been some discussion again this morning about free speech. And when you read the actual underlying bill as it is introduced, the bill is seeking to essentially make it illegal for the Federal Government and Federal employees to discuss racism in the workplace. And so, the irony is, we are having a conversation here in the Committee room that would probably be prohibited by the bill itself. That is what the bill is trying to stop, is having these kinds of conversations, so I just want to point that out, and I yield back.

Mr. CLOUD. Will the gentlelady yield? I think I have time actually. Chairman, do I have time?

Chairman COMER. Yes. The Chair recognizes Mr. Cloud.

Mr. CLOUD. That is a misstatement, while maybe well intended. What this does say, is that if you are a Federal contractor, you cannot force your employees to attend DEI training. You cannot make them sign a paper that says that they recognize that they are from a privileged race or the like. All these things are happening. It does not prohibit a discussion about people. The freedom of speech will still exist at companies all over the place, will still exist at contrac-

tors, at any organization getting a grant. So, I think you are overstating what this bill does in that regard.

Ms. STANSBURY. Gentleman, would you allow me a moment, yield me a moment, for me to read the language of the bill?

Mr. CLOUD. Sure.

Ms. STANSBURY. OK. Multiple places in the bill, the bill specifically makes it illegal for the Federal Government to enter into agreements, to provide grant funding, to otherwise engage with public, private, or nonprofit entities that do the following, and this is the exact language: “maintain an office relating to diversity, equity, or inclusion; “maintaining or employing a chief diversity officer or substantially similar officer;” “developing, implementing, distributing, publishing, or purchasing a training course relating to diversity, equity, inclusion, or accessibility,” which is folks with disabilities; “critical theory relating to race or gender.” You are not even allowed to talk about intersectionality, folks, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Mr. CLOUD. I will take back my time.

Ms. STANSBURY. That is what the bill actually says, people. It says it in multiple places.

Mr. CLOUD. The key provision was the first part, “no taxpayer funds will go to.” It does not prohibit those things from happening. If you own a business and you want to have a DEI office, you can have a DEI office, but we are not going to make the American taxpayer pay for it. That is simply what it says. Not funding something is not prohibiting something.

Chairman COMER. All right. Now, are we ready to vote? Good deal.

The question is on the amendment No. 2 offered by Ms. Pressley. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes.]

Ms. PRESSLEY. I request a recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair—a recorded vote has been requested by Ms. Pressley. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

For what purpose does Ms. Pressley seek recognition? You seek more recognition? We are done. Good deal. All right. Ms. Stansbury, do you seek recognition?

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

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

Mr. CLOUD. Can I reserve a point of order?

Chairman COMER. And Mr. Cloud reserves a point of order.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. Does everyone have the amendment? The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The CLERK. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8076, as offered by Ms. Stansbury of New Mexico.

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

Mr. Cloud reserved a point of order. The gentlewoman from New Mexico is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. STANSBURY. All right. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and I do thank my colleagues across the aisle for what has been an interesting journey this morning to discuss the history of this country and how we continue our long march on the road to justice and equity. The purpose of this amendment is to try to get at protecting the Federal workforce. We know from hearings that we have had in this Committee over the last several months as authors of Project 2025, even including one of the chapters was written by a recent appointee nominee to be in Trump's cabinet, that part of the plan of Project 2025 and the Trump Administration is to purge the Federal workforce.

And when you read the actual text of the underlying bill, it appears that this is one of the tools that they are using to purge the Federal workforce. Of course, it goes much farther, as has been discussed this morning. It also interferes with the military, which, of course, is also part of the Federal workforce, but also the private sector. It is looking to regulate what the private sector does, including boards of stock-market-traded companies, publicly traded companies, as well as folks who work in the financial markets.

So, what this amendment would do is simple. It would strike the entire bill and all that follows, and it would replace it with very simple language to protect our Federal employees: "Federal employees shall be selected and advanced on the basis of competence rather than political or personal favoritism, and no executive branch agency may take action counter to the intent of the law or against the fundamental rights of Federal workers who comprise the civil service." And in many ways, this is just a reaffirmation of existing Federal employment law, which, it is important to note, was put in place largely a number of the protections that this bill attacks, not only through the Civil Rights Act, to make our Federal workforce more diverse, but also to protect Federal employees after Richard Nixon tried to purge the Federal workforce.

And so, we have seen this playbook before. We saw in the 1950's with McCarthyism. We saw it during Nixon's tenure in the White House when he tried to purge the Federal workforce. This is like a reboot. This is, like, the new season. This is the new reality TV show. And if you needed any evidence of the fact that we are living in a reality TV show, look at some of the nominees who have been nominated to be the heads of these agencies. So, we just want to make sure we are protecting the Federal workforce and that our reality TV Cabinet secretaries do not go after them, and that is what this amendment is all about.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Chair, I invoke my point of order based on germaneness.

Chairman COMER. State your point.

Mr. CLOUD. I raise a point of order on germaneness.

Chairman COMER. OK. I am prepared to rule. The amendment is not germane to the bill. Therefore, the amendment is not in order. For what purpose does Mr. Frost seek recognition?

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

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

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The CLERK. An amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8706, as offered by Mr. Frost of Florida.

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

I reserve a point of order.

The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FROST. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, you know, before I talk about my amendment, I just want to be clear. My amendment is going to focus specifically on veterans serving in the Federal Government from the harms of this bill, but I oppose the impacts that the underlying bill will have on every single employee in the Federal Government.

Today, veterans make up more than 30 percent of the workforce, according to OPM. That is over 636,000 people who have served their country in uniform and continue to do it as civilians. H.R. 8706 would completely overturn 150 years of precedent for supporting our veterans. The government has a longstanding, careful, considered procedures for orderly reductions in force dating back to 1944 with the enactment of the Veterans' Preference Act. These procedures are codified and implemented through OPM regulations, building on a principle established far back as the Civil War that veterans who have sacrificed for this country should be given preference in Federal hiring and retention.

The law requires that any reduction in force, from the government, that we retain "equally qualified" veterans over others. Under this misguided bill, a qualified veteran could immediately be fired for simply working in a diversity, equity, and inclusion office, regardless of their combat service, disability status, or their decades of exemplary performance, or their proven value to the agency. You can just imagine a veteran who served in combat, became disabled, worked 30 years in the Federal service, spent the final few weeks, final few months, final few years working in a DEI office. Under this bill, that veteran would be immediately terminated without any opportunity to demonstrate their value to the Agency. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment to ensure reductions in force comply with the law, respect veterans' preference, and uphold the principles of good governance.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Mr. Cloud.

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you, and I certainly appreciate the gentleman's intent in this. Both sides of the aisle certainly respect those who have served in uniform. I am proud to represent a district that is a place people flock to because of how our community supports veterans. I have a concern about this and would love to work with you on it, but my concerns are of a technical nature in us getting at this at the last minute to understand the potential unintended consequences. Very specifically, I could speak to the provision that says, "Code of Federal Regulations." We do not have the time in the moment to go through the entire Code of Regulations related to this and see what is there, not to mention that could change to-

morrow without Congress doing anything. So, we certainly want to protect veterans.

I do not think that this would negate the longstanding status quo we have toward veterans, but the moment, I think we would have to object to this until we could work that out, but I would certainly be happy to work with you on making sure that we get the intent of what you are doing before this goes to the Floor.

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

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is on the amendment offered by Mr. Frost from Florida.

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. The amendment is not agreed to.

Mr. FROST. I request a recorded vote.

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

For what purpose does Ms. Brown seek recognition?

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

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

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. Everybody have the amendment?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The CLERK. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8706, as offered by Ms. Brown of Ohio.

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

I reserve a point of order.

The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes to explain the amendment.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This bill completely contradicts the vision and principles of this Nation and would erode the Federal Government's enforcement of nondiscrimination protections in communities that are uniquely underserved. It will strip the Federal Government of a workforce focused on the mission of their agency and ensuring an inclusive, positive, and safe workplace for all employees. And to make matters worse, it would force Federal agencies to close down all Federal offices that operate diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, fire employees who work in those positions, and prevent them from finding a new job elsewhere in the Federal Government. My amendment would ensure any employee or contractor from an underserved community in danger of getting removed from Federal service is afforded appropriate opportunities to remain in Federal service, pursuant with current Federal law.

On February 16, 2023, President Biden issued an executive order that sought to build a Federal workforce that reflects the fabric of

our Nation and deliver resources and benefits to the American people consistent with the needs of the public. This landmark executive order ensures equity for people that belong to communities that have been systematically denied equal treatment under the law. That includes employees who are from communities of color; individuals from communities that face discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender, including LGBTQ+ people; individuals who face discrimination based on pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, parents and caregivers; individuals who belong to communities that face discrimination based on their religion or disability; people who live in rural communities and veterans and military spouses; first generation professionals or college students; immigrants; people with limited English proficiency; and the formerly incarcerated; or individuals facing employment barriers based on older age.

The people who fall under these categories are your friends, your neighbors. They are also Federal employees. H.R. 8706 would fire people simply because they had the misfortune to work in an office that our Majority does not like. The bill as written would mean that a pregnant woman, who is already likely to face persistent discrimination in the workplace, would be fired simply on the basis that they worked for a Federal or contracting office that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion activities. It would mean that a person who lives in a rural town would be let go with no possibility of reassignment just because they worked in a diversity, equity, and inclusion office. It would eradicate positions for people with disabilities who currently work in these programs, regardless of their level in the office, who are making progress toward Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's rules to make up 12 percent of the Federal workforce.

I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter from the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund stating its concerns with H.R. 8706 and its potential effect on Federal workers with disabilities and broader disabilities community.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you. It would allow the firing of LGBTQ+ people for the sole reason that they took a position that upholds a mission of building a Federal workforce that reflects the communities it serves, and it would coldly fire veterans and their spouses who make up more than 30 percent of all Federal employees, with no possibility of reassignment because they want to continue serving their country in a different capacity. This legislation would provide a chilling downstream effect across Federal agencies in all offices and Federal workers across all levels of government.

I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the American Federation of Government Employees statement against H.R. 8706 in which they write, "While AFGE certainly applauds any legislative proposal to curb and eliminate employment discrimination in the Federal workplace, we regard H.R. 8706 as actually setting back that cause, not advancing it, under the broad pretext of combating discrimination, which has long been illegal. H.R. 8706 would, if enacted, eliminate virtually all agency initiatives currently in place to develop and maintain a dignified, respectful, and safe workplace that enables Federal agencies to carry out laws and

directives in a professional and efficient manner.” Without objection? Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. BROWN. OK. Our Nation’s strength is in its diversity. Our Federal workforce must embody that strength. This bill exemplifies our Nation’s weaknesses. For these reasons, I respectfully ask my colleagues to support this amendment, which will protect dedicated workers in our Federal Government.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady’s time has expired. I will recognize myself.

Ms. Brown’s amendment adds a new section to the end of the bill that, in the name of fighting discrimination, entrenches discrimination in favor of a host of specially defined groups. We should all be able to agree to be against all forms of discrimination. I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment. Do any other Members seek recognition?

Ms. BROWN. We should all be able to agree racism exists.

Chairman COMER. Do any other Members seek recognition? Mr. Cloud.

Mr. CLOUD. I will just say, I concur with the Chairman. This amendment, in the name of nondiscrimination, actually would be, if adopted, systemic racism in excluding people from a cut of an agency based on all these determinant factors that we have discussed all day. It would be very concerning if this were to pass.

And I will just point out that no matter how many times it is said that this bill prohibits people from continuing and ever working in the workforce, you can say it a thousand times, and it will be as untrue on the thousandth time as it was the first time. People can still reapply. This bill simply eliminates offices that are not providing value to the American taxpayer. It is probably 1 initiative of a 100 or more that need to happen for us to get back to some sort of fiscal restraint, which is maybe our No. 1 national security issue that this country is facing. And so, with that, I will yield back to the Chair.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none. The question is on the amendment offered by Ms. Brown.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those oppose, signify by saying no.

[Chorus of noes.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the noes have it. The amendment is not agreed to.

All right. Our next item for consideration is H.R. 8753, to direct the United States Postal Service to designate single, unique zip codes for certain communities and for other purposes. The Clerk will please designate the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 8753, to direct the United States Postal Service to designate single unique zip codes for certain communities 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. 8753, 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 the sponsor of the bill, who has championed this bill, for 5 minutes on a statement. I recognize Ms. Boebert from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 8753, to direct the United States Postal Service to designate single unique zip codes for certain communities, and for other purposes. My bill will benefit Colorado and communities throughout the country by providing unique zip codes for cities and towns, including the Colorado communities of Castle Pines, Centennial, Cherry Hills, Greenwood Village, Highlands Ranch, Lone Tree, Silver Cliff, Severance, and Superior. More than 30 communities, and I suspect it could be more than 40 communities by the time this markup is finished, throughout America are being negatively impacted by not having their own unique zip code. These municipalities deserve consistent mail service, their fair share of tax revenue, and the other economic benefits associated with having their own zip code. My bill will solve a host of real-world problems for these cities and towns by finally providing them with a definite, representative, and accurate zip code. Sexy, right? I think so.

The zip code system was instituted in America in the 1960's and the Postal Service utilizes the zip code system to deliver mail, but it is also heavily used and relied on by economic developers, insurers, and emergency personnel, amongst others. Communities that do not have a unique zip code often experience associated problems that include loss of economic development, loss of sales tax, unjustifiably high insurance rates, tax remittance and commercial licensing issues, diminished public safety, and reduced emergency response times, identity issues, and efficiency issues.

On behalf of my colleague, Congressman Troy Nehls, I would like to highlight his concerns for the Village of Somers in Wisconsin, which applied for a zip code boundary review through the United States Postal Service in 2022 and did not receive an answer until 2024, letting them know that the review had been denied. This is not something that is rare. In fact, it is very common to be denied when requesting this issue, and this area affects approximately 3,200 individual mailing addresses in this particular community. Some of Somers includes confusion over state sales tax revenue going to other municipalities rather than where it is actually collected; companies refusing to pay for emergency calls by the Somers Fire & Rescue Department, stating that the wrong department was dispatched because their residence was listed in the next county over. Customers, employees, deliveries, and contractors experience confusion when the mailing address of a business is located in Somers but has a Kenosha mailing address.

These are all extremely important issues, and there are others that would be addressed by this legislation. This current process allows small towns and cities to petition the Postal Service for a new zip code, but it is rarely approved, and if it is denied, they cannot appeal this decision for up to 10 years. Congress has intervened on these matters in the past and passed law enacting four new zip codes through the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006, so there is precedence for this type of legislation.

My bipartisan bill has support of communities and Members throughout the country, and while this may seem like a niche issue to some, it is a very important issue to these cities and towns who asked us to put forward this bill on their behalf. I urge adoption of this bipartisan bill and Members of this Committee to support small cities and towns throughout America. This is an issue that I have been championing for nearly 4 years now. It started in the small town of Silver Cliff, Colorado in Custer County, and this was their No. 1 issue that they had brought to previous Members of Congress and asked to be addressed. And I am so happy that they are one of the many communities that are listed in this piece of legislation, and we can proudly and finally bring government efficiency to our communities. Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields. The Chair recognizes Ranking Member.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my honor and my pleasure to endorse this amendment brought forth by the very distinguished gentlelady from Colorado. The unique zip code issue is a common problem actually, and I admire her bipartisan perseverance in advocating for a whole bunch of different districts that find themselves in the same situation with respect to this problem. So, I am happy to endorse it, and I will yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I recognize myself.

The Postal Service organizes delivery of mail zip codes, five-digit numbers that organize how to deliver the mail. There are currently over 41,000 zip codes in the United States. While zip codes are usually aligned with local boundaries, this is sometimes not the case. H.R. 8753, sponsored by Ms. Boebert, will create new zip codes for communities across the Nation. This is the product of various Members' advocacy. The bill creates 39 new zip codes, including in Eastvale, California; Oakland Park, Florida; and Sargent, Texas. And last, I would like to thank Representative Boebert, the sponsor of the bill, for her work representing her constituents in Silver Cliff, Colorado. Congratulations. Any other Members seek recognition? For what purpose does Mr. Moskowitz seek recognition?

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment on the desk.

Chairman COMER. Will the Clerk designate the amendment?

The CLERK. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8753, as offered by Mr. Moskowitz of Florida.

Chairman COMER. The staff will distribute the amendment.

[Pause.]

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

I reserve a point of order.

The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I fully support Representative Boebert's bill to give certain communities a single unique zip code. This has been an issue plaguing many towns for years. Mail gets redirected, delayed, lost when different towns have the same street names and the same zip codes. Changing the zip codes will alleviate everyday stress for our constituents and make our postal system work better for everyone. My amendment is very simple. It would add five additional towns in my district to the list who have been trying to fix this issue for over 15 years. I urge my colleagues to support this simple amendment and a commonsense fix, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members seek recognition? Ms. Boebert.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chairman, I just want to say that I support this amendment from my colleague from Florida, Mr. Moskowitz, by adding these five towns that he represents, towns that have asked for this to be designated to receive these unique zip codes for some 15 years now. Unfortunately, my bill will not address every city and town that is having this issue throughout our country, so hopefully this will encourage the USPS to be more responsive and to avoid denying some of these cities, who we are helping put in requests in the future. I would urge those who are having this issue to contact your representative.

My legislation comes from many bills that have been submitted over the years by Members of Congress who were individually trying to solve the zip code issue, who have written legislation, who have written letters to the USPS, and just were not getting anywhere with it. So, we have combined all of these cities and towns, these communities, to designate their unique zip codes, and I am very proud to have the support of Chairman Comer and Ranking Member Raskin, and also to have this amendment with these five towns from Congressman Jared Moskowitz added to my bill. Again, this is not going to fix all of them, but we have more than 40 here that we will be able to address, and I hope that we can get this to the House Floor quickly and pass the bill in its entirety before the 118th Congress is adjourned. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members seek recognition?

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

Chairman COMER. OK. We are going to vote on this one first, right?

Mr. LANGWORTHY. OK. Yes.

Chairman COMER. OK. Does any other Member seek recognition on the Moskowitz Amendment?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the Chair recognizes Mr. Grothman.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Does anybody know what the Post Office thinks of this stuff?

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Do they think it is going to cost money?

Ms. BOEBERT. [Inaudible].

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes.

Chairman COMER. They oppose.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes, well, OK.

Chairman COMER. Any other Member seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is on the amendment offered by Mr. Moskowitz.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those oppose, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

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

Do any other Members seek recognition? Mr. Langworthy.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Chairman, my amendment would also—

Chairman COMER. You have an amendment at the desk?

Mr. LANGWORTHY. At the desk.

Chairman COMER. Would the Clerk designate the Langworthy amendment?

The CLERK. Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8753, as offered by Mr. Langworthy of New York.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. So, my amendment would also afford this opportunity—

Chairman COMER. Hold on 1 second. Without objection, the amendment is considered as read.

I reserve a point of order.

The gentleman from Buffalo, New York, is recognized for 5 minutes to explain his amendment.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Well, thank you very much. I salute the work of the distinguished gentlewoman from Colorado, Ms. Boebert, on this. This is something that I have been working on in New York's 23rd Congressional District, back to my staff days 15 years ago, in asking for inclusion of the community of Pendleton, New York, to have a unique zip code as well. They are currently split in a very confusing manner, and it has been very troublesome for this growing community, and would appreciate any opportunities that this has to be considered by this Committee. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Very good. Any other Members seek recognition?

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. Ms. Boebert.

Ms. BOEBERT. Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would just say that I also support Mr. Langworthy's amendment to the ANS adding Pendleton, New York, to this list. He mentioned that there are split zip codes here in this location. I just spoke with the Mayor of Severance, Colorado, and I was under the impression they shared one zip code with Windsor, Colorado. But after talking with the Mayor, an issue that they have been working on for about a decade now, there are six zip codes that the city of Severance shares with, and so that is why they have been included in this legislation. And so, I do not oppose the adding of Pendleton, New York, and, again, I urge the adoption of this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield.

Chairman COMER. Any other Members seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, all those in favor of the amendment offered by Mr. Langworthy from New York, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those oppose, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

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

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 oppose, 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. 8753, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those oppose, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

Mr. HIGGINS. Recorded vote.

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair—the Chair recognizes Mr. Higgins. Mr. Higgins requests a recorded vote. As previously announced, further proceedings on the question will be postponed.

Pursuant to the previous order, the Committee stands in recess until 3:05, that is in 7 minutes, 3:05 for official votes.

Committee stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman COMER. The Committee will come back to order.

Before we begin to vote, I ask unanimous consent to enter the following article from Representative Scott Fitzgerald into the record, an article from the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* titled, "Milwaukee's New Sales Tax is Wrongly Affecting Some of its Suburbs."

Without objection, so ordered.

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 10133. Members will record their votes using the electronic—we will suspend.

And let me make an announcement. If you did not get the memo, at the conclusion of the vote, after the postal naming bills—that is always the last vote—we are going to take a Committee picture, and we are going to look like one big, happy family. It is going to be a great picture. Yes. Now, you can kind of move, scoot to the right a little bit.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. All right. We will come back to order, and we will begin voting.

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 10133. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 10133.

[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 38. The nays are zero.

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. 10132. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 10132.

[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 38. The nays are zero.

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. 10155. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 10155.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. Have all Members voted 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 38. 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. 10062. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 10062.

[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 17.

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. 8690. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 8690.

[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 38. 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. 9040. Members will record the votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 9040.

[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. Have all members been recorded?

[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 24. The nays are 15.

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. 10151. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 10151.

[Voting.]

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

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The Clerk will close the vote.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 39. 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 Committee will now resume consideration of H.R. 8706, the Dismantle DEI Act.

The question is now on the previously postponed amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by the Ranking Member. 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. 8706.

[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 18. The nays are 21.

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

The question is now on the previously postponed amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute, offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts, Ms. Pressley. This is the Pressley Amendment Number 1. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on the amendment.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Chairman, is this the HBCU amendment?

Chairman COMER. Yes. Yes.

Ms. PRESSLEY. OK. All right. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. Yes, the historically Black college and university amendment.

Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. This is the amendment dealing with the historically Black colleges and universities.

Have all Members been recorded who wish to be recorded?

[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 amendment is agreed to.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Wow. Thank you, everybody. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The question is now on the previously postponed amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Ms. Pressley from Massachusetts. This is the Pressley Number 2 Amendment. Members will record their vote using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on the amendment to the amendment of H.R. 8706.

[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 17. The nays are 23.

Chairman COMER. The nays have it, and the amendment is not approved.

The question is now on previously postponed amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute, offered by Mr. Frost from Florida. 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. 8706, the Frost Amendment.

[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. Everybody voted? We are good?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The Clerk will please report the total.

The CLERK. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 17. The nays are 23.

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

The question is now on the previously postponed amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute, offered by the gentlewoman, Ms. Brown. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system.

OK. The question is now on the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8706, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those oppose, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 8706 is agreed to.

The question is on favorably reporting H.R. 8706, as amended. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 8706.

[Voting.]

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

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Have all members been 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 23. The nays are 17.

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. 8753. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system. The Clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 8753.

[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 Boebert bill is ordered favorably reported.

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

Pursuant to notice, I now call up the following en bloc postal-naming bills which were distributed in advance of this markup. And remember, we are taking a picture after this, so stick around. H.R.s 9360, 9544, 9775, and 10065.

Without objection, the bills are considered read.

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

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Mfume from Maryland.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Raskin, for obviously holding the markup, but also moving us to these postal renamings.

Congressman and former Oversight Chairman Elijah Cummings was born in Baltimore. Both parents came from Southern sharecropping families, but they managed to raise seven children, among them, our friend, Elijah. Elected to the Maryland House of Delegates in 1982, he became the youngest chair of the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus and the first African-American elected speaker pro tem by that body, a permanent role which now stands in the Maryland House of Delegates. In 1996, Delegate Cummings won his seat to the U.S. House of Representatives that I had previously vacated, starting his 23-year tenure in Congress, during which he advocated, as we know, for all people.

Congressman Cummings became the Chair of the congressional Black Caucus in 2002, where he pushed to increase funding for public education and the crucial Head Start program. As Ranking Member and then Chairman of the House Oversight Committee, Mr. Cummings admirably led the Committee in holding anyone accountable who went astray, regardless of party or position. The presence of Elijah's portrait hanging over us here in this Committee room is a powerful reminder of the promise of our Nation. This renaming is another way for all of us in this body on both sides of the aisle to say thank you to him for his hard work on be-

half of our country and the way of doing things that meant so much to many of us.

In my role as his predecessor and his successor, I want to thank again the Ranking Member, who serves out of the state of Maryland with me; Chairman Comer, for keeping your word on this naming measure; and Members of this Committee who have voted to move it forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back my time.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Do any other member seek recognition on the postal naming bills?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is on favorably reporting the en bloc package.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those oppose, signify by saying no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The en bloc measures are favorably reported.

The motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

Pursuant to House Rule XI, Clause 2, I ask that Committee Members have the right to file with the Clerk—and remember we are going to take pictures, guys. We are going to take pictures. 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.

Now we take our picture, one happy family.

[Whereupon, at 3:31 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]