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MARK-UP OF SEVERAL BILLS

for the

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

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JULY 22, 2026

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The documents listed above are available at: docs.house.gov.

FULL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING MARK–UP OF SEVERAL BILLS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2026

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

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James Comer [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Comer, Jordan, Turner, Gosar, Foxx, Grothman, Cloud, Palmer, Higgins, Sessions, Mace, Fallon, Donalds, Perry, Timmons, Burchett, Boebert, Langworthy, Burlison, Crane, Jack, McGuire, Gill, McCormick, Garcia, Norton, Lynch, Krishnamoorthi, Khanna, Mfume, Stansbury, Frost, Casar, Crockett, Randall, Subramanyam, Bell, Simon, Min, Walkinshaw, Menefee, Pressley, and Tlaib.

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

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

Pursuant to Committee Rule 5(b) and House Rule 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.

The first order of business is ratifying the new Subcommittee roster. The clerks have distributed the roster electronically.

I ask unanimous consent that the Committee approve the appointments and assignments as shown on the roster.

Without objection, the Subcommittee roster is approved.

I would like to welcome Representative Christian Menefee from Texas to the Committee. We will welcome him when he gets here later. We are glad to have him on the Committee. I now yield—well, okay. All right. We will take care of that later.

H.R. 6610, THE PHARMACISTS FIGHT BACK [IN FEDERAL EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFITS PLAN ACT]

Our first item for consideration is H.R. 6610, the Pharmacists Fight Back.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

The Clerk. H.R. 6610, the Pharmacists Fight Back in Federal Employee Health Benefit Plans Act: a bill to amend Chapter 89 of Title V, United States Code, to limit the cost of pharmacy benefit managers with respect to Federal employee health benefit 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 substitute.

The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The Clerk. An amendment the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6610 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.

Rarely a day goes by that I do not hear from Kentuckians concerned about the high cost of prescription drugs. Over the last several years, I have worked closely with Kentucky pharmacists to learn more about the pharmacy benefit managers, or PBMs, that are lurking behind the scenes, keeping patients from accessing the most effective medications for them. I am pleased that today we have an opportunity to address an issue that is so important to so many Americans. I am thankful to have led this bill with my Democrat colleague, Representative Auchincloss from Massachusetts.

H.R. 6610, the Pharmacists Fight Back Act, will make much-needed, meaningful changes to the pharmacy benefit market serving Federal employees. For too long, Federal employees and taxpayer-funded Federal agencies have been held captive by a healthcare system manipulated at every turn by three large PBMs and their affiliate companies. Originally designed to facilitate negotiations to reduce the cost of prescription drugs for patients, consolidation has left us with three pharmacy benefit managers controlling over 80 percent of the private market. Dominant PBMs utilize their market leverage and control over drug prices, rebates, pharmacy reimbursements, insurers, and pharmacy networks for their own financial gain. Meanwhile, Americans are forced to pay higher prices for drugs.

By skimming discounts meant for local pharmacies, certain PBM practices actually drive up prices for patients. Some PBMs have been found civilly liable for these practices and the harmful impacts on Americans who need access to affordable prescription drugs in multiple states across the country. Earlier this year, the Office of Personnel Management's Office of Inspector General found that Caremark alone had overcharged a Federal Employees Health Benefits program insurance carrier more than $615 million. The Inspector General highlighted how Caremark used its complexity and size to hoard discounts, credits, and financial benefits it was receiving rather than pass those savings along to patients or the Federal Government like they are supposed to do.

The Oversight Committee is moving the Pharmacists Fight Back Act to reign in PBMs and curb abusive practices. The bill restricts massive price markups and increases transparency in pharmacy reimbursement. Some may argue that this legislation will increase premiums. However, we have real-world evidence out of West Virginia's Insurance Commissioner's Office which demonstrate that the policies in this bill actually reduced premiums. Similarly, in Georgia, the Georgia State Auditor and Director of the Office of Planning and Budget projects millions each year in savings from these policies. The bill also prevents a PBM from steering beneficiaries toward pharmacies owned by the PBM so that a consumer can go to the pharmacy of their choice, and the bill enforces these ground rules through noncompliance penalties.

This bill is a good start, but we have a lot more work to do to make sure that specialty drugs and oncology drugs are reimbursed appropriately. We must also guarantee that long-term care pharmacies and other specialty pharmacies are paid not only for the medications they dispense, but also for other core clinical and specialized services as is currently recognized in Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidance. While this bill may not address every single possible cause of high healthcare costs, it represents a giant step in the right direction.

This bill is supported by over 60 state and national pharmacy groups, including the Kentucky Independent Pharmacist Alliance, Kentucky Pharmacists Association, the American Pharmacy Cooperative, Community Oncology Alliance, and Transparency Rising. This bill is part of a result of our ongoing investigation, in this Committee, of the PBMs and three full Committee hearings we have had discussing the problems with pharmacy benefit managers and how they actually lead to higher prescription drug costs for most Americans. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill, and I now yield to the Ranking Member.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also support this bill, and I think it is clear that the American people are facing an affordability crisis, and the price of nearly everything has gone up—groceries, gas, housing, healthcare—and families are definitely struggling to make ends meet. It is important for Congress to continue to address the cost of healthcare by addressing every part of the healthcare system. Now, pharmacy benefit managers, of course, are companies that manage drug benefits on behalf of health insurance companies and Federal healthcare programs, and also, recently, under the Biden Administration, the FTC cracked down on some of PBMs' activities. The FTC had found that they artificially raised drug prices in some cases.

I want to thank Congressman Jake Auchincloss also for his incredible work. I know how important this bill is to him and how important this bill is to Chairman Comer as well. It is a bipartisan bill, and certainly this bill will ensure that discounts on prescription drugs go to patients, and that is what is most important. So, we support this bill, and this bill gets us one step closer to meeting the goals of healthcare. Thanks again, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Before I recognize anyone who wants to speak on the bill, I ask unanimous consent to enter the following into the record: a letter from the Kentucky Independent Pharmacist Alliance in support of the bill; a letter from the Senior Care Pharmacy Coalition; a letter from more than 60 state and national pharmacy groups in support of the bill; a letter from the Community Oncology Alliance in support of the bill; a letter from Transparency Rising, a letter from the National Association for Federal Employees and Retirees in support of the bill; a letter from the American Pharmacists Association in support of the bill; and a letter from the National Taxpayers Union in support of the bill.

Without objection, so ordered.

Does anyone seek recognition on the bill? Mr. Burlison.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate you holding this markup today. I agree with you, I think, 99 percent of the time, and——

Chairman COMER. This is not starting off good.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BURLISON. And you and I are very good friends. I respectfully disagree on this topic from my personal experience and background. Look, the high costs of prescription drugs are a serious issue that we are facing in America, and it deserves our attention. However, I disagree with this approach.

We all want to lower prescription drug prices, but the policy matters. This bill requires pharmacies to be reimbursed at the national average drug acquisition cost plus the lesser of four percent or $50, along with state and Medicaid dispensing fees. These are added costs for PBMs or insurance companies that are passed to the customer that would normally provide savings to our constituents. Similar rate-setting legislation proposed in Louisiana under H.B. 529 in April 2023 was projected to increase costs by $37 million in just the very first year.

Additionally, the bill requires point-of-sale application of manufacturer rebates so that patient cost sharing is based on the net cost of the drug, and it requires full passthrough of rebates to carriers. The legislation also prohibits PBMs from directing patients to specific pharmacies. In essence, I mean, my comparison here would be, it would be like requiring someone who has a Costco membership to be allowed to go to Sam's Club. This will just essentially drive up costs.

Regarding stakeholders in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program, many of them have voiced opposition to the bill, including Government Employee Health Association and the Mail Handler's Benefit Plan. These groups understand because they see the purchasing side of this decision and that it will cause their plans to go up. They have specific concerns that it would interfere with the mail order pharmacy option that currently help improve medication adherence and control costs. I said this last year: PBMs use their economies of scale to drive down costs in the same way that Walmart uses its economy of scale to drive down costs, who we all know does a great job of selling things in bulk. PBMs are paid based on performance, and you do not have to pick them. If they are doing their job and being effective, then they will get the business. If not, then the purchaser, the employer will go somewhere else.

At the end of the day, I want people to know on this Committee, I had the exact same opinion that you have if you support this bill. I used to believe this. I used to see them as a boogeyman because I did not understand the intricacies and the complexities of how it all worked. I thought that they were part of the problem. But after serving specifically on the board of Missouri Consolidated Insurance, where I was tasked with the responsibility of purchasing the insurance and deciding whether we get a PBM or not or which company we are going to use, and seeing firsthand that you have direct control over the mechanisms and how exactly your pharmacy benefit manager is managing you as the employer and the decisions that you want to make, it completely changed my attitude.

And so, respectfully, I will be voting against this bill, and with that, I yield back.

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

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a July 21, 2026, letter from NARFE, the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to be supporting the bill today because I think this is a worthy effort and worthy of consideration. I do just want to urge all of my colleagues to keep an open mind. Look, it is not reform if it does not lower costs for Federal workers that FEHB serves. And there have been previous similar pieces of legislation or legislation with similar provisions that CBO scores have determined actually increase plan costs and premiums. And if this bill is to come to the Floor, there will be a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) score in advance that will demonstrate whether it increases or reduces costs to the program, and that increase or reduction in cost to the program will be passed on to premium payers, the Federal workers. So, I just want to urge all of us to keep an open mind and review that CBO score closely. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I ask unanimous consent to enter the following into the record: a study from West Virginia's Insurance Commissioner, which shows how similar policies actually reduce premiums rather than increase them; testimony from the West Virginia Insurance Commissioner that similar passthrough and National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC) policies reduce costs rather than increase them; a study from the American Pharmacy Cooperative which shows the positive impacts these policy changes will have on the Federal Employees Health Benefits plan; an examination by the Georgia State Auditor and Director of the Office of Planning and Budget showing how similar policies would save Georgia taxpayers millions each year; and last, a report from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

Without objection, so ordered.

Any other Member seek—Mr. Palmer.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with you 98 percent of the time. In this case, I agree with you a hundred percent.

Chairman COMER. All right.

[Laughter.]

Mr. PALMER. This has been a problem for years. Prior to serving in Congress, as you know, I ran a think tank, and I was meeting with folks who were trying to explain to me how the PBMs work and why this runs up price. Their profits are tied to the list price of the drug, which incentivizes drug makers to set a high price because it gives them preferential treatment. They know that the PBMs will prefer a higher-priced drug over a lower-price drug, which does nothing to benefit the consumer. It is not just prescription drugs. It is also prescription eyeglasses, and talking with doctors in that field, they are often locked into labs that might not be providing the best work because that is how their plan works. They are locked into that.

So, I think what we are trying to do here is something that is long overdue. Like I said, it has been a problem for years. Talking with independent pharmacies, they struggle dealing with this, and I think it is high time that we do something that puts the patient first instead of the corporate profits. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Any other Members seek recognition? Yes, sir. Mr. Lynch from Massachusetts.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to express my strong support for this bill. So, I have been on this Committee a while. We actually did a deep dive on PBMs a number of years ago. We were helped enormously by a group called Change to Win, which was a group of labor unions that felt that PBMs were jacking up the price of the cost to their members, and so they did a deep dive as well, a study. I will give you one example of what we found, this Committee, when we looked at PBMs.

So, our Committee oversees the Federal Employees Health Benefit plan—FEHBP—and we found that because of the PBMs that were regulating the prices, and this is a cost to the taxpayer, right? This is a cost of government, when we are talking about healthcare for Federal employees. We found that the PBMs put us in a situation where, and this was one of the stark examples, CVS had a coupon program where you could walk into a CVS drug store and they had a formulary, and you could get those drugs at their special price. You did not have to have insurance, you could walk in right off the street, and here were the prices that you would have to pay for certain drugs.

We found that it was better, because of the PBMs jacking up the price, it was better for a union member, a Federal employee on Federal Employees Health Benefit Plans (FEHBP), whether they were unionized or not unionized, it was cheaper for them to just put their insurance card that they had paid for—now, we have 18 million Federal employees and retirees that qualify for FEHBP. The collective bargaining power of those 18 employees and their contributions to their insurance meant nothing. It was cheaper for them to put their Federal insurance card in their pocket because the PBMs—the prices were higher for people with insurance than it was just walking in off the street, and we found that that was because of the PBMs.

So, we took them to court, and what we wanted to know, what the Federal Government wanted to know, was what are you doing with these rebates, and how was that affecting the cost to the consumer, in this case, the Federal employees? We took them to court, and we lost because they fought us. They did not want to provide transparency on how the PBMs were working, how they operated. They said that that was a proprietary secret, and so the PBMs fought the Federal Government, fought the Federal employees, fought the public from knowing how they were operating.

PBMs are jacking up the price of drugs in this country, plain and simple. It is another layer of cost. Buying drugs should not be that complicated, right? You have got insurance. There is an insurance company already involved. You go in to your drug store, hopefully a local drug store, although those are disappearing as well, and all my local pharmacies are opposed to these PBMs and are supporting this bill. That should tell you something. Go to your local druggist if you still have one. Go to your local drug store if you still have one. Ask them about PBMs. They are ripping people off. They are squeezing, they are monopolizing that whole sector. They are eliminating these small drug stores. I probably had five of them in my little neighborhood at one point. Now I got one. I got a CVS. Sometimes it swaps into a Walgreens, but that is basically it.

So, this is really, really important. We are at a critical point here. We can do the American people a big, big, big favor. Get rid of these PBMs. Get rid of them. That is another person taking a profit in the chain of providing drugs to the American public. Get rid of these PBMs. That is what this bill does, and I am 100 percent for it, and I ask my colleagues to vote supportively as well. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, Mr. Lynch. Mr. Perry.

Mr. PERRY. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. It is not too often I find myself in solidarity with Mr. Lynch.

Chairman COMER. I was thinking the same thing.

Mr. PERRY. But on this occasion, I do find some distress in the fact that I am not in solidarity with my friend, Mr. Burlison, and from my part, I want to be clear. I am not really interested in the Federal Government getting involved in private contractual agreements between private entities; however, in this case, a private entity involved with the government. So, the government is a party to it, and I think the government, as the representative of the people, should have the information. My concern, among other things, is it is hard for all of us up here to figure out who is hiding the ball, and I am not here to pick on anybody. I do not know. It seems like the PBMs make money, the Big Pharma makes money, but your local consumer, the average citizen cannot afford it, and your local pharmacies, especially independents, are being driven out of business.

Now, the money is going somewhere. Somebody is making a lot of money, but we cannot find out who it is because we cannot get the information on private contractual agreements. And where they are between private businesses and private entities, that is between them, but when it involves the Federal Government as the representatives of the Federal Government and of the people that pay the taxes and pay for these things, we have not only the right to know. We have the obligation to know what the information is. And so, it is my hope that with this, at a minimum, we will have the information so we can figure out who is hiding the ball and make sure that the consumer is being represented, and that there will be a broader—that we will figure out eventually exactly where the money is going.

And this is on one occasion, this is just one account, this is just one instance, but I think this will inform us of the greater landscape, the greater battlefield of this so that we can make appropriate decisions. The problem in my mind has been nobody wants to say anybody is a bad actor here. Nobody wants to accuse anybody because we do not know, and the point is we need to know. And once we do know, then we can take appropriate action, and I think this is a step in the right direction. I am glad that this was a bipartisan effort. I support the Chairman on it, and I support the bill. With that, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. 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, say 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. 6610, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

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

[No responses.]

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman?

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

Mr. SESSIONS. I would like to ask for a recorded vote.

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

H.R. 9720, THE D.C. TAXING AUTHORITY REVIEW ACT

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 9720, the D.C. Taxing Authority Review Act.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

The Clerk. H.R. 9720, the D.C. Taxing Authority Review Act: a bill to require a resolution of approval by Congress on acts of the District of Columbia with respect to Title 47 of the District of Columbia Code or which impose or increase a tax or fee, and for other purposes.

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

Without objection, so ordered.

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

The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The Clerk. An amendment in nature of a substitute to H.R. 9720 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 H.R. 9720, the D.C. Taxing Authority Review Act, which requires congressional approval of any act of the District of Columbia that imposes or increases a tax or fee.

Radical D.C. Democrats want to solve their spending problem by reaching deeper into taxpayers' pockets and driving further on the path to socialism. The D.C. Council recently supported a feasibility study for the implementation of a new business activity tax. This would add to the already high tax burden that businesses in the District already face. Additionally, the Council proposed a new tax on D.C. residents, who are already one of the highest-taxed populations in the country. The D.C. Council is also planning on imposing new fees on deliveries of everyday groceries and essentials.

Actions like these only serve to hurt small businesses and the District's already vulnerable residents. These are just more examples of bad policy that disincentivize investment, drive residents out, and undermine the economic competitiveness of the city. Rather than cutting spending, the ultra-progressive and socialist Democrat candidate for mayor and the D.C. Council want to tax D.C. business and residents into oblivion to fund their unmaintainable extension of public programs. This comes as D.C.'s Chief Financial Officer has identified a $1.1 billion budget hole.

Choosing to reject necessary spending reforms and instead increasing taxes penalizes residents and burdens businesses, further weakening the District's lagging economy. To improve the economic competitiveness of the District, I am working with Treasury Secretary Bessent to find ways to make D.C. more attractive to businesses. The D.C. Council cannot tax their way out of financial devastation that their policies have created. It is our congressional duty to act when the radical D.C. Council's reckless fiscal policies jeopardize D.C.'s future. This bill enhances Congress' constitutional oversight authority over D.C. to restrain irresponsible policies pursued by future socialist and ultra progressive D.C. Democrats.

This bill is supported by the Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC) Action, Independent Women's Voice, National Taxpayers Union, the Taxpayers Protection Alliance, and DoorDash. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and recognize the Ranking Member for his statement.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I strongly oppose this bill, which is another direct attack on the 700,000 residents of the District and on democratic principles. Now, this Congress and this Committee has passed more bills on local D.C. matters than on any other matter in front of this Committee. In fact, this is the 20th bill we are considering that would interfere with local D.C. residents and their governance.

Now, D.C.'s locally elected officials are accountable to D.C. residents, and local leaders should be empowered to address local matters without congressional interference, and I know I have said this many times, but if Donald Trump or congressional Republicans want to run D.C., they should run for Mayor and City Council. But the bill in front of us, which takes away D.C.'s authority to impose or increase a tax or revenue unless Congress approves, is a direct attack on the residents that elect officials to make these decisions. Currently, a law enacted by D.C. takes effect after a congressional review period, unless a disapproval resolution is enacted into law during that period. Now, this bill flips that process completely. Under this bill, a law enacted by D.C. that imposes or increases a tax or fee could not take effect unless an approval resolution is enacted into law during the congressional review period.

Now, D.C. has more residents than two states, pays more Federal taxes than 26 states, and more per capita than any state. Instead of acting as a super city council, the Congress should be considering D.C. statehood today. I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill, and I yield back.

[Applause.]

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Does any other Member seek recognition?

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to thank you and the Oversight staff for responding over the course of several days, allowing us to correct some of what, we believe, was unintended consequences in the granular detail of this bill. We studied it very carefully, and accommodations were allowed, intended to facilitate the administrative operation of the city of D.C. at the municipal level without uncalled for interference by Congress and the executive branch, while at the same time, fully supporting the overall measure of conducting our constitutional responsibility as it relates to our Nation's Capital and the operation thereof.

So, we did make those adjustments, and I thank the Chairman and the Committee staff for accommodating those conversations and arriving at a final product that I am able to fully support and endorse. I yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Ms. Norton from Washington, D.C.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I strongly oppose this radical, undemocratic, paternalistic, and unworkable bill. This bill would be the biggest reduction in the District of Columbia's authority to govern itself since Congress passed the D.C. Home Rule Act in 1973. This bill takes away D.C.'s authority over its Tax Code, turning the D.C. Council into an advisory body for taxation. D.C. could not impose, or increase, or cut, or eliminate a tax without congressional approval. I will repeat that for my Republican colleagues: D.C. could not cut or eliminate a tax without congressional approval. In fact, the scope of this bill is much broader than Republicans have claimed. This bill applies only to taxation, but to all of Title 47 of the D.C. Code. That title has more than 50 chapters and encompasses not only taxation, but also licensing, permits, assessments, and fees, among other things.

This bill flips the current congressional review process for D.C. law on its head. Currently, a D.C. law takes effect after a review period unless a disapproval resolution is enacted into law during that period. This bill prohibits a D.C. law that imposes or increases a tax or a fee or amends Title 47 of the D.C. Code from taking effect after 60-day period unless approval resolution is enacted into law during the period. The only exception is that this bill does not apply to a D.C. law that imposes or increases a fee if that fee is less than $500 and the law does not impose or increase any other tax or fee.

This Congress, Republicans have introduced more than 130 bills, amendments, and riders that interfere in local D.C. matters, including a bill to repeal the Home Rule Act. The 700,000 D.C. residents, the majority of whom are Black and Brown, are capable and worthy of governing themselves. If D.C. residents do not like how members of the D.C. Council vote, residents can vote them out of office. That is democracy. If D.C. residents do not like how Members of Congress vote on local D.C. matters, residents cannot vote them out of office. That is an antithesis of democracy. D.C. residents have all the obligations of American citizenship, including paying all Federal taxes, serving on juries, and registering with Selective Service, yet Congress denies them full local government and voting representation in Congress.

The only solution to this undemocratic treatment is to grant D.C. statehood. Congress has the authority to admit D.C. as a state. The D.C. statehood bill would reduce the size of the Federal District from 68 square miles to two square miles, consisting of the White House, the Capitol, the Supreme Court, and the National Mall. The residential and commercial areas of D.C. would be a new state. I urge Members to vote no on the Chairman's bill. Free D.C.

I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter of the D.C. Chairman opposing this bill. I also ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the index of Title 47 of the D.C. Code so that the Committee is on notice that this bill applies to much more than D.C. law that imposes or increases a tax or fee, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

The gentlelady yields back. Before I recognize Mr. Perry, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a statement from the AMAC Action in support of this bill; statements from the Taxpayers Protection Alliance supporting the bill; a letter from the National Taxpayers Union supporting the bill; a letter from the Independent Women's Voice supporting this bill; and a letter from DoorDash supporting this bill.

[Laughter.]

Chairman COMER. I got to like DoorDash.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Perry from Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just remind everybody that D.C. is not only home to the great residents of Washington, D.C. It is the Nation's Capital, and people from across the country come here because they have to. They have to do business with the Federal Government, and they do not have any option to vote for or vote against the people on the D.C. Council that affect their lives and their business when they come here. And I am an original cosponsor of the bill, and so I support it.

After watching the District subject its residents and visitors to years'—years'—worth of petty fines, predatory fees, and tax hikes, it has become necessary for Congress to reluctantly intervene. Let us be clear in recognizing the District has a spending problem, not a revenue problem. They got a lot of money. Since 2015, the D.C. Government has increased its revenue by 62 percent, but somehow, the D.C. Council has also managed to maintain a $1.1 billion hole in its annual budget. We have watched the Council withdraw hundreds of millions of dollars from its reserves, but it still attempts to collect millions of additional fines and dollars with suspiciously sensitive automatic traffic cameras and other money-making schemes without residents' approval. Residents of the District of Columbia already have one of the highest tax burdens in the Nation, but somehow the response to that is to implement a future traffic congestion toll on hardworking residents, commuters, and visitors from across the Nation, who are already plagued with excess expenses.

Throughout the 119th Congress, this Committee has managed to pass two of the bills I have offered with bipartisan support that stopped D.C.'s predatory money-making schemes. One of the bills I offered, 5525, the Stop DC CAMERA Act, would ban the city's use of these highly unpopular automated traffic cameras. Another bill, 8801, the DC ROADS Act, would preemptively prevent the District from implementing a traffic congestion toll in the future. D.C., by the way, has one of the worst traffic problems in the country, and the fact that they do not allow a right turn on red or fine you for that, I do not know what world, like, are they living in the dark ages? I mean, if they want traffic to get better, let people use their discretion and be responsible for themselves. With D.C. Mayor-Elect Janice Lewis George already discussing plans for a new congestion toll upon taking office, the time to act is more critical than ever on the DC ROADS Act.

Fortunately, the $500 aggregate threshold in Chairman Comer's bill would successfully prohibit the city from ever implementing this burdensome idea without Congress' approval. In tandem, all three pieces of legislation will help restore the District's fiscal sanity and prevent a new wave of unprecedented taxes and fees that we can expect to see in 2027. It is clear that the intent of Congress here is to stop the District from preying upon its residents, nationwide visitors, and daily commuters alike. I urge adoption, final passage, and I yield the balance.

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

Mr. FROST. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I am in deep, deep opposition to this ill-conceived and foolish bill.

[Applause.]

Mr. FROST. Listen, this was said already. This the worst attack on Home Rule since the bill was passed in 1973. This bill will take control of D.C.'s taxes, fees, budget. And so people know how this works, currently, when D.C. City Council passes a local tax or budget law, it will take effect unless Congress steps in to stop it. This bill completely changes that. It would make it so that way these bills do not take effect unless Congress votes to approve them within 60 days. Seriously, we cannot even pass our own bills.

[Applause.]

Mr. FROST. Now you want to add to that and pass the bills of D.C.? You want to run the D.C. budget? Why don't we run our own budget instead of letting the President have the power of the purse and decide what happens in this country?

[Applause.]

Mr. FROST. This is one of the most unproductive Congresses we have had in the history of this country, and I believe it——

[Applause.]

Mr. FROST. Of course, I am against trampling on D.C. Home Rule and local rule—fully against that—but it is also just foolish to add to our plate when we cannot even get the must-pass legislation across the finish line. It is foolish to add this. This bill would block changes that residents and businesses in D.C. need. Imagine that D.C.'s budget makes changes to D.C.'s rules around building permits. Congress would have to review and agree on those changes and move them forward, Federal actions that are just continuing to squeeze D.C.'s budget. Cuts to health and food assistance have increased costs for residents.

Last year, due to DOGE, which does not exist now, thousands of D.C. workers lost their Federal jobs, and thousands more lost their private sector jobs due to the ripple effect. And last spring, let us not forget, that Congress forced D.C. to reduce its spending by more than $1 billion through changes through the CR.

[Applause.]

Mr. FROST. And many Republicans even came up and Republican leadership even came out and said that was a mistake. This is the problem. And so, I am fully opposed to this legislation, and I would encourage my colleagues to maybe focus in on the things your own constituents want you to focus on because I promise you——

[Applause.]

Mr. FROST [continuing]. This bill is not the top, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, not the top ten, top 20, top 30 priorities that our own constituents want us to focus on. Let D.C. be D.C. Let them elect their leaders, and let their leaders do what they want to do. And if you have a problem with it, if you have a problem with the turning on red or whatever was said, pick up a clipboard, move to D.C., and run for the City Council, and if you win, you can make a change there.

[Applause.]

Mr. FROST. I encourage all my colleagues to oppose this legislation, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record an Annual Economic Assessment from the Tax Foundation entitled, "2026 State Tax Competitive Index," and this assessment ranks Washington, D.C.'s Tax Code 48th least competitive compared to the 50 U.S. States.

Without objection, so ordered.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Walkinshaw.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. "Financial devastation"—that is the phrase you used to describe D.C.'s budget. That is an apt phrase to describe what this Republican Majority has done to the Federal budget.

[Applause.]

Mr. WALKINSHAW. We are considering this week reconciliation bill Number 3. Let us go through them. Number 1 blew a $4.7 trillion hole in the Federal budget. The deficit skyrocketed with a trillion-dollar cut to healthcare. Reconciliation bill Number 2—maybe you all do not think this is a lot of money—$72 billion deficit spending. This week, we are looking at reconciliation bill Number 3 to fund a failed war in Iran, $95 billion, and we are hearing that there will be a reconciliation bill Number 4, and finally then the Republicans will get around to reducing the deficit. Now, if you believe that—maybe Mr. Perry and I would agree on this—if you believe the Speaker when he says, "Finally, with Number 4, we will get around to reducing the deficit," I got a bridge over the Potomac I will sell you because it ain't going to happen.

In addition to devastating the finances of our Nation, you are devastating the finances of the American people. Gas prices skyrocketing, groceries skyrocketing, tariffs costing families money, the war raging as we speak, and you want to talk about D.C. The District of Columbia is legally required to balance its budget, and it will this year as it has every year for decades. Mr. Frost said it well: if you do not like D.C.'s budget, its policies, its tax policies, you can run for Mayor, or City Council, or Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) Commissioner, and some of my Republican colleagues have been here in Washington long enough, you are probably eligible. Until then, maybe we should focus on getting our own financial house in order.

So, Mr. Chairman, I am opposed to this bill. I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Mr. HIGGINS. Will the gentleman yield for a question, Mr. Walkinshaw?

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Sure.

Mr. HIGGINS. Before you yield back?

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Sure.

Mr. HIGGINS. Sir, we look forward to your support, I can presume, for a balanced budget amendment when we bring that to the floor because——

Mr. WALKINSHAW. I am looking forward to reconciliation Number 4 where you all promise you are finally going to get around to reducing the deficit.

Mr. HIGGINS. Good, sir. Will you support reconciliation Number 4? Are you on record?

Mr. WALKINSHAW. I am looking forward. I look forward to reviewing it. I look forward to it.

Mr. HIGGINS. Do you support a balanced budget for the Federal Government?

Mr. WALKINSHAW. I look forward to reconciliation Number 4——

Mr. HIGGINS. I am asking you right now to back up your word.

Mr. WALKINSHAW [continuing]. Where you finally get around to reducing the deficit.

Mr. HIGGINS. Do you support a balanced budget amendment for the United States of America?

Mr. WALKINSHAW. You have blown a $5 trillion hole——

Mr. HIGGINS. Because we are going to find out.

Mr. WALKINSHAW [continuing]. In the debt and deficit.

Mr. HIGGINS. We are bringing that bill to the Floor.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Reclaiming my time.

Mr. HIGGINS. And we will see how you vote.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HIGGINS. We are going to give you an opportunity to back that up, sir.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HIGGINS. I yield back.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. I yielded my time.

Chairman COMER. Actually, everybody's time has expired.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Higgins, I support a balanced budget amendment. I will vote for that.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So shall I.

Chairman COMER. Before I recognize Mr. Lynch, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record an article from *TheDCLine*, entitled, "The D.C. Council's Election Year Budget Panders and Jeopardizes."

Without objection, so ordered.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Lynch.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you. I want to, first of all, associate myself with the remarks of Mr. Frost and Mr. Walkinshaw. I think they have addressed the major issues.

I do want to point out here, first of all, you know, I am totally opposed to this bill. It takes the right of the people of the District of Columbia to actually govern themselves, and I think they are entitled to that. You know, I have been here long enough where, you know, we had deep concerns about the way the Government in D.C. managed its affairs. But I have to say that in the past 20 years, they have been aggressive in terms of getting their house in order and balancing that budget, and that was not always the case. So, I think recent administrations of D.C. deserve some credit for that, and, also, I think the residents demanded it. I think, you know, in terms of educating their children and managing the affairs of the District, they have done an excellent job.

This bill, if you look at it closely, it requires that when the City Council passes an ordinance or passes a licensing agreement or a permit, makes an assessment in dealing with the regular operations of the District of Columbia, after they pass it, they must sit and wait for 60 days to determine whether or not Congress will have the time or the interest to actually approve that resolution. So, it is unworkable in what they are doing.

Think about D.C. We all spend at least four or five days a week here. These people like their protests, you know. You know, there is not a day that goes by, and I only live, you know, several blocks from here, but when you think about this government, this city is where people come to petition their Federal Government. There are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of events in this city every single year that require permitting, that require fees to be collected because there are costs to this city because it is the center of Federal Government, and people from all over the country come here. And in a very real way, the people of D.C. have to pick up the tab for that with their police and first responders.

And their City Council and the city government itself has to review these permits, and licensing requests, and assessments and fees for the daily operation of this city. And if they have to wait 60 days after every single request for a permit, or a fee, or a petition to actually hold a protest here or some other activity in order that American citizens can exercise their right to petition their government, this is not helpful. This is not helpful. And again, I do go back to Mr. Frost's comments about is Congress really doing such a great job with our own responsibilities that we face every single day that have a Federal impact, that we can now jettison those or put those off to the side while we manage the parades, and protests, and licensing requests, and permits, and fees that should be handled by the Government of the District of Columbia?

So, this is wacky, this whole idea that Congress is now going to become, you know, the de facto Washington, D.C. city council. That is what this proposes here. We are not doing such a great job at our own jobs, the ones that we ran for, never mind taking on the responsibilities that should rightly lie with the Washington, D.C. City Council and its own government. So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back.

[Applause.]

Chairman COMER. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the following article from the *Washington Post*, entitled, "D.C.'s Economy Shrank by 8.3 percent in the Fourth Quarter."

Without objection, so ordered.

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

Chairman COMER. *The Washington Post*. Yes, ma'am?

Ms. STANSBURY. All right. Well, good morning, everyone. I am actually quite sad that Mr. Perry has stepped out of the room because the exact quote that he said was, "D.C. has a spending problem," which I do find quite preposterous the day that we are actually going to vote on a budget resolution to blow another $95 billion hole through the Federal deficit.

[Applause.]

Ms. STANSBURY. So, I did want to ask Mr. Perry about that and how he plans to vote, but unfortunately he stepped out of the room. But I do think this is a good time to maybe pull back the curtain a little bit, Mr. Chairman, and I would love to have a little colloquy or a debate with you just to understand where this bill came from because what I find peculiar, I am always interested as a former staffer, when you see bills like this that are sponsored by somebody who is not from the area that they represent, and the leadership of the Committee are the co-sponsors of it, and there are 21 co-sponsors from this Committee, the vast majority of which are from across the country, that usually indicates that these bills are being asked to be carried by the leadership by somebody else. So, Mr. Comer, where would this bill come from?

Chairman COMER. Well, this is consistent with what we have tried to do successfully. The last time we had a budget review bill was to undo the D.C. excessive criminal justice legislation that the D.C. Council passed. Mr. Raskin raised tee-total heck. I think all the Democrats on the Committee voted against it.

Ms. STANSBURY. All right. Can I——

Chairman COMER. It passed the Floor, it passed the Senate, and Joe Biden signed it into law, so, but you——

Ms. STANSBURY. But my question for you——

Chairman COMER. One other thing, and I——

Ms. STANSBURY. No, no, hold on just a second. Let me ask you the real question. I really want to know, did this spring from your mind? Like, so just let me ask. The bill basically says that any D.C. law that creates a new tax or fee, like, any law that D.C. passes could not take effect until Congress votes on it. Was that your idea?

Chairman COMER. We all have brainstormed, yes.

Ms. STANSBURY. No, your idea. Mr. Comer from Kentucky?

Chairman COMER. Whose idea do you think it would be? I mean, we——

Ms. STANSBURY. I do not know. That is why I am asking you.

Chairman COMER. You say we do not live here. We spend at least half our time here. This is where we work. There is where we——

Ms. STANSBURY. No, but I am asking you——

Chairman COMER [continuing]. I have spent three nights in a row.

Ms. STANSBURY. But so, okay. You were in local law enforcement, right, before you came here?

Chairman COMER. I am with what?

Ms. STANSBURY. Were not you in local law enforcement before you came to serve in Congress?

Chairman COMER. No, no.

Ms. STANSBURY. Oh, I thought you had.

Chairman COMER. That would be Mr. Higgins.

Ms. STANSBURY. No. Oh, okay, but you did something in local government before you came here.

Chairman COMER. I was a State Representative and Commissioner of Agriculture.

Ms. STANSBURY. Okay. So, you worked in state government. Can you imagine——

Chairman COMER. I am a farmer.

Ms. STANSBURY. Okay.

Chairman COMER. If you ask me, what do I do, I am a farmer.

Ms. STANSBURY. Okay. Even better.

Chairman COMER. There you go.

Ms. STANSBURY. Okay. So, as a former state official, just think about this from the business perspective and the way this bill is drafted. If you had to have every single decision that you made about bringing in revenue and spending go through Washington, D.C., would you approve that?

Chairman COMER. There is a real concern with the D.C. Council——

Ms. STANSBURY. No, I am just asking you this question.

Chairman COMER [continuing]. And the socialism and a cry from the people of Washington, D.C., who pay taxes and create jobs.

Ms. STANSBURY. Would you support that for the State of Kentucky? Should Kentucky, when they make poor decisions for their constituents, have to come to Congress to get their budget approved?

Chairman COMER. That what?

Ms. STANSBURY. Do you think the State of Kentucky should have to come to Congress to get their state budget approved?

Chairman COMER. I think the State of Kentucky and the Federal delegation need to have communication so we can work together.

Ms. STANSBURY. But can you imagine having to go through Congress to get your tax and revenue for the State of Kentucky approved?

[Applause.]

Chairman COMER. Well, there are things that we have to work with on a daily basis. I mean, you act like there is no communication. I do not know if the New Mexico people do not communicate with you, but we communicate with the Kentucky——

Ms. STANSBURY. I would never ask the State of New Mexico to have to go through Washington, D.C., to get their budget approved——

[Applause.]

Ms. STANSBURY [continuing]. Because we have sovereignty, so.

Chairman COMER. You do not communicate back and forth with New Mexico on state and Federal issues at all?

Ms. STANSBURY. We do not ask them to have their state budget approved by Washington, D.C., and Congress. Is that what you are——

Chairman COMER. Well, you know, I would assume a big percentage of the New Mexico——

[Cross-talking.]

Ms. STANSBURY. I know you are going to run for Governor soon. Is that what you would advocate for Kentucky?

Chairman COMER [continuing]. Budget involves Medicare, Medicaid. I mean, that is a big——

Ms. STANSBURY. We do not——

Chairman COMER. Whether you like it or not, a big part of the New Mexico state budget——

Ms. STANSBURY. Okay, but that is——

Chairman COMER [continuing]. Comes from the Federal Government.

Ms. STANSBURY. Do you believe in states' rights?

Chairman COMER. I do believe in states' rights.

Ms. STANSBURY. Well, then why do you not support the sovereignty and independence of D.C. to make its own budgetary decisions?

Chairman COMER. It is not a state. We have legislative jurisdiction over Washington, D.C. We do not want to see more economic decline in this city as a result of a socialist takeover of this city with more taxes.

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

Ms. STANSBURY. Okay. Well, let me ask you one last time. Would you like to tell the good people of Washington, D.C., where this bill came from? Did you write it?

Chairman COMER. We have filed this bill today——

Ms. STANSBURY. Did you personally write it?

Chairman COMER [continuing]. And you can vote against it like you voted——

Ms. STANSBURY. Did you write it?

Chairman COMER. Did I? We have——

Ms. STANSBURY. Did you write the bill?

Chairman COMER. We have bill drafters that write the bill.

Ms. STANSBURY. But where did the bill come from, and why is all the leadership——

Chairman COMER. What are you thinking here? What is your theory? What is your conspiracy theory?

Ms. STANSBURY. I do not have a conspiracy; I just want to know. The people are here for your——

Chairman COMER. Well, I have answered the question three times.

Ms. STANSBURY. This a public hearing, so we want to know where the bill came from.

Chairman COMER. Where do you think it came from? I have no idea what you are digging for.

Ms. STANSBURY. I have no idea. This is why I am asking you.

Chairman COMER. I am curious. I mean——

[Laughter.]

Ms. STANSBURY. Can you just answer the question?

Mr. HIGGINS. It sounds like a question from a third grader, "Did you write the bill?"

Ms. STANSBURY. I am sorry, sir. You are not recognized.

Mr. HIGGINS. Good lord. It is a collaborative effort, and you know it.

Chairman COMER. Well, actually, Ms. Stansbury.

[Cross-talking.]

Mr. HIGGINS. I yield.

Ms. STANSBURY. Let me just say this. I think it is obvious——

Chairman COMER. Ms. Stansbury, your time is up.

Ms. STANSBURY [continuing]. This bill was not written by the people of D.C.——

[Applause.]

Ms. STANSBURY [continuing]. And I think it is obvious that you are trying to make this happen without their consent.

Chairman COMER. All right. The Chair recognizes—anybody seek recognition? Mr. Palmer.

Mr. PALMER. I will be happy to answer the question. Article I, Section 8, Clause 17 gives Congress absolute authority over the District of Columbia. It was set up that way. James Madison wrote in Federalist 43, "The Federal Government must have absolute authority over its own seat of government to ensure its security and operational integrity." That is the issue: the operational integrity of the District of Columbia. You do not have states' rights. It was never intended for District of Columbia to have states' rights. So, in terms of Congress, Congress has absolute authority in all cases whatsoever.

I would also add that the communist wing of the Democratic Party that is threatening to take over the Democratic Party wants to eliminate the Senate, they want to eliminate the presidency, and they really want to eliminate the Constitution. To raise a question about whether or not we have authority here——

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

Mr. PALMER. Mr. Chairman, the Committee is not in order.

Chairman COMER. Please.

Mr. PALMER. You will refrain. I would like to start the clock again, sir.

Chairman COMER. Yes, sir.

Mr. PALMER. We have the responsibility. The question was raised or the point was made to Mr. Perry that he should run for the D.C. City Council. That would be a reduction in authority. Congress has ultimate authority over the District of Columbia.

In terms of the whole issue of spending, they raised the issue about DOGE and what we are trying to do to make the Federal Government more effective, more efficient, and less expensive. During the Clinton Administration, they had the National Partnership for Reinventing Government. I do not know how many of you people in here realize this—there are a few Members of the Democratic Party that are still in office that were in office then—but there were 426,000 Federal jobs eliminated by the Clinton Administration. Thirteen of fourteen Federal Departments were impacted. They saved $136 billion. They closed over 2,000 field offices and eliminated 250 programs. I thought that was a great start. Full disclosure, when I ran a think tank, I was invited by the Clinton Administration to come up to make recommendations. In terms of deficit spending, the Biden Administration set a record: $8.4 trillion.

So, when you talk about authority, it rests in the Constitution. Every Member of Congress took an oath of office to uphold and defend the Constitution, all of it. Not part of it. Not the parts that you like. You cannot disregard the parts you do not like. So, what we are trying to do is make Washington, D.C. a successful city. It is not a successful city. I mean, I remember Marion Barry, the former Mayor, said if it were not for the murders, Washington's crime rate would not be so bad. That is an embarrassment. So, what we are trying to do is make this a livable city, a place where families can prosper, where businesses can prosper, where people can walk the streets in safety. We are trying to right-size the Federal Government. That effort is not over by a long shot.

So, my Democratic colleagues can say whatever they want to. They are scared to death about the communist wing of the party that might take their seat as some of them have already lost their seats. I am afraid of that, too. I do not want to see us lose our Constitution. I do not want to see anyone lose their constitutional rights. I do not want a government so stinking big that it can tell you what you can have and what you cannot have. That is what this is about. You have full authority, Mr. Chairman, to have the bill written. Every Member of Congress uses legislative reference to write bills. We do not sit down and write the bills ourselves because most of us, particularly someone like me, I do not have a law degree. I worked in engineering. I am more about solving a problem. We have people who have expertise in that to write bills, so it is an absurd argument to make, but I want to reiterate——

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

Mr. PALMER. Sir.

Chairman COMER. Please. We will have order. If anyone continues unnecessary outbursts, we are going to ask you to leave. Proceed, Mr. Palmer.

Mr. PALMER. You might not like what I have just laid out, but it is the Constitution. You can read it for yourself. I am tempted to ask that the Constitution be entered into the record, but I know most of the people on the other side of the aisle will not read it. I yield back.

Ms. STANSBURY. It is already in the record.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. 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, say 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 in favor of reporting H.R. 9720, as amended. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, say no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes—the Chair recognizes Mr. Higgins.

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

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

H.R. 9725, THE RESTORING INTEGRITY AND EFFICIENCY TO INSPECTOR GENERAL OVERSIGHT ACT OF 2025

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 9725, the Restoring Integrity and Efficiency to Inspector General Oversight Act of 2025. The clerk will please designate the bill.

The Clerk. H.R. 9725, the Restoring Integrity and Efficiency to Inspector General Oversight Act of 2025——

Chairman COMER. Without objection.

The Clerk [continuing]. A bill to amend——

Chairman COMER. Oh, I am sorry, go ahead.

The Clerk [continuing]. Title 5, United States Code to abolish the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and for other purposes.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, the bill shall 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 substitute.

The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The Clerk. An amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 9725 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, the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have been working on this bill for a long time because CIGIE has been a serious problem and focus of concern. Let me set the stage for this for the

American people, and then during the course of debate, I am happy to answer all questions.

The Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency, referred to as CIGIE—C-I-G-I-E—is an independent entity within the executive branch. CIGIE's membership consists of more or less 75 Inspectors General, some of whom are appointed by the President with Senate confirmation, but the majority of CIGIE's members are appointed by heads of executive branch agencies, the heads of entities in the legislative branch, or they, in some cases, are private citizens appointed by the leaders of government-chartered corporations. The members of CIGIE elect one member to serve as chairperson. So, CIGIE as a whole, maybe was born of good intentions, but it has operated and come to be recognized clearly as a rogue government politicized and, all too frequently, weaponized government entity.

Now within CIGIE exists what is called an Integrity Committee. The Integrity Committee consists of four Inspectors Generals chosen by the chairperson of CIGIE, a designee from the FBI, and a designee from the Office of Government Ethics. The members of the Integrity Committee elect one member to serve as chairperson. So, you have CIGIE as an overall entity, and then within CIGIE, you have this star chamber of the Integrity Committee. CIGIE and the Integrity Committee have operated in manners contrary to the Constitution for a long time. The Integrity Committee's investigations into Inspector Generals [sic] or employees of Inspector Generals [sic] in his or her "personal capacity" is inconsistent with long-established legal principles.

The Integrity Committee improperly shifts the burden of proof to the respondent, which is essentially the opposite of our longstanding criminal justice procedures. The Integrity Committee's access rule regarding evidence and review of data is invalid. CIGIE and the Integrity Committee have historically been biased actors with a partisan alignment. The Integrity Committee has acted against the legal interest of the United States, even interfering with litigation before an adjudicator with exclusive jurisdiction. The Integrity Committee has abused its authority by obtaining privileged information—listen to this, America—by compulsion and then disclosing that information outside the executive branch without consent or court allowance. The Integrity Committee has unlawfully expanded its jurisdiction by examining an Inspector General's actions as a private citizen, far outside its original parameters.

For the past five years, Mr. Chairman, the House Oversight Committee has raised bipartisan concerns regarding the failures of the Integrity Committee to effectively manage misconduct allegations in a transparent manner with Congress. And recent findings of the Government Accountability Office documented significant failures in how CIGIE's IC reviews and investigates complaints against IGs and their staff, which calls into question CIGIE's ability to effectively conduct investigations into misconduct and wrongdoing. Continued failures and abuses by CIGIE and the Integrity Committee, the star chamber within CIGIE, have shown the Inspectors General cannot be trusted to investigate wrongdoing within their own ranks, and, therefore, it is necessary to end CIGIE and the Integrity Committee, transferring CIGIE's core functions to the appropriate authorities within the Federal Government that conduct criminal investigations in a fair and unbiased manner.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to what will no doubt be a vigorous debate of this bill. I urge its support from both sides, and I yield.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, gentleman. The Chair recognizes the Ranking Member, Mr. Garcia, for his statement.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and of course with respect to Mr. Higgins, who I know has been working on this issue, I just want to note that we strongly oppose this effort. The Restoring Integrity and Efficiency to Inspector General Oversight Act, we believe, is an effort to weaken nonpartisan Inspector Generals [sic] and make it easier for the Trump Administration's corruption to spread across government.

Now, the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency is an independent oversight body created by Congress in 2008 with strong bipartisan support, supported by both Republicans and Democrats, which performs important functions for the oversight community. Their responsibility is to conduct oversight work, promote accountability within the Inspector General community, and develop training and quality standards. CIGIE provides critical background support for 28 offices of Inspector Generals [sic] across the Federal Government. It helps all of these IG offices and different agencies find and fight waste, fraud, and abuse.

Now, eliminating CIGIE, we do not believe actually helps the public. It enables more corruption throughout every agency at a time, of course, where corruption in government is at an all-time high. I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose this bill, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Any other Member seek recognition on the bill? Mr. Walkinshaw.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the following letters in opposition to H.R. 9725, which would abolish CIGIE: first a letter from 15 former Inspectors General; second, a letter from former Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security, John Roth; third, a letter from Project on Government Oversight; and fourth, a letter from Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, or CREW, the Government Accountability Project, or GAP, Project on Government Oversight, POGO, Protect Democracy, Public Citizen, and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I think the Ranking Member did a good job of outlining concerns that I share. I will just share one paragraph from Mr. Roth's letter that my Republican colleagues might be interested in. He writes, "For example, in 2015 during the Obama Administration"—that is my word, 'Obama Administration'—"the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel issued a legal opinion that cut back on the authority of IGs to get information from their agencies to conduct audits." CIGIE discussed the situation and its impact on oversight. Ultimately, CIGIE sponsored a letter signed by more than 45 Inspectors General that notified this Committee and other congressional committees of the issue. This ultimately resulted in this Committee sponsoring and Congress passing the IG Empowerment Act of 2016 to clarify and reinstate the authority of IGs to receive information. The Chair and Ranking Member of this Committee stated, "We are pleased to see this bill become a reality. This bipartisan legislation will help inspectors general root out waste, fraud, and abuse, and it will pave the way toward greater openness and transparency in government."

So, during the Obama Administration, CIGIE identified that the Obama Department of Justice was restricting the ability of IGs to get information and conduct their audits to root out waste, fraud, and abuse. Because they have a degree of independence, they were able to alert this Committee, Democrats and Republicans, and this Committee in a bipartisan way was able to address it. If this legislation passes abolishing CIGIE, something like that will never happen, whether it is in this Trump Administration or a future Democratic administration, and that is the strength of CIGIE.

And I think it is important to point out that, as we have had in this Committee hearing after hearing from my Republican colleagues claiming that combating fraud is their top priority, they turn a blind eye to Donald Trump trading stocks; selling access to insider information; accepting lavish gifts; ripping off his supporters with digital schemes; sending taxpayer dollars to fund his sons' tungsten mine in Kazakhstan; contracting fraud at DHS; waste, fraud, and abuse in agency after agency. And as that is occurring, we have this bill to eliminate an entity that across multiple administrations, Democrats and Republicans, has worked effectively to help Inspectors General root out waste, fraud, and abuse.

I think the American people should ask why: why this effort to kneecap the people whose job it is to drain the swamp, because the swamp is getting deeper and deeper and smellier and smellier, and this Congress does not want to look at it, and that is what this bill is about. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mr. Sessions.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I do appreciate the gentleman for his thoughtfulness about aiming his comments at President Trump, but this Committee dealt with President Biden and his son—cocaine, trips, all sorts of things, and that Administration did everything that they could do to hide the truth, including the laptop and a lot of other things, and this Committee invested a lot of time and effort. I welcome the gentleman to go after all that that he wants, but simply to sit here and try and show that this is something that we should be doing as opposed to the trillions of dollars that got away from the taxpayer during President Biden's four years is what we are on and what we will stay after.

The gentleman knows that. He has been involved in my hearings. He knows that that is of far more importance to this Committee and to me, and so I think that what we are trying to do here is keep the issue directly ahead of us. I do not have to agree with the gentleman, Mr. Higgins, but I do work with him. I do not have to agree with you, but I do work with you, and I just want you to know \$2 trillion is what this effort is about from the Committee, and at least my Subcommittee.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield my remaining time to the distinguished gentleman from Louisiana.

Chairman COMER. Mr. Higgins?

Mr. HIGGINS. I thank my friend for yielding. Because it is my nature, I would presume goodness from both sides of the aisle here, excellence of intent. The foundational methodology of CIGIE shifts the burden of proof in an investigation to the accused. This is the opposite, my fellow Americans, from the longstanding uniqueness of the American criminal justice system, which states that the accused need not prove his or her innocence. The accuser, whether it is a criminal, civil, or civil service proceeding, the burden of proof lies in the prosecution. We do not have to prove our innocence in America. Prosecutors have to prove our guilt. That is what makes our system so unique.

In the history of mankind, a criminal justice system as I have just described has not existed, but CIGIE reverses that. We built this government entity—again, in deference to my colleagues from prior Congresses—established CIGIE perhaps with the best of intentions, but we have empowered them to create themselves into a monster, and this is what they have become. When the burden of proof requires a respondent in an inquiry to produce an explanation and evidence within 20 days that no reasonable person could find that the respondent committed the misconduct that has been alleged, this is a complete reversal of our longstanding criminal justice procedures.

Now, the Integrity Committee shifting that burden is reflective of the way it operates. CIGIE conducts itself in a biased, targeted, weaponized manner. This is what we have a duty to oppose. We have long identified it. We have had dozens and dozens of official interactions, hearings, investigative endeavors through this Committee, through various offices of Members that serve upon this investigative Committee, the Oversight Committee of Congress. We have long established that CIGIE is rogue. It is biased. It is making its own rules. It has operated as a weaponized government entity against both parties. It should be abolished. That is what this bill does, and I thank the gentleman for yielding his time. I yield back.

Mr. SESSIONS. I yield back my time.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes Ms. Stansbury.

Ms. STANSBURY. All right. Well, as per usual, I have no idea what my colleagues across the aisle are talking about because let us talk about what Inspector Generals [sic] actually are. But I just want to state affirmatively that it is very clear that this Administration and, unfortunately, their allies in Congress have a real problem with corruption and accountability because the nonpartisan entities that are the watchdogs for the American taxpayers are the Inspectors General. And if you recall, last year in January, the President of the United States fired 17 Inspectors General on one day.

Now, what is an Inspector General? An Inspector General sits at an agency, and their job is to investigate waste, fraud, and abuse. Their job is to audit the books of agencies and make sure that they are not wasting taxpayer dollars and engaging in fraudulent behavior. They review and investigate unethical behavior, and then they publish all of that publicly. Now, there is a Council that sets standards, which is what is trying to be gutted today, to make sure that it remains nonpartisan, to make sure that the Inspector Generals [sic] have general guidelines on how to operate, and that maintains the ethical oversight of the Inspectors General.

So, I just want to—you know, the American people are smart. The American people get when nefarious things are going on. Since last year, this Administration has now removed 21 inspector generals. Now, they want to make you think that they created DOGE and that they are investigating waste, fraud, and abuse, but all of that is a front because DOGE is dead. Elon Musk and the President admitted it did not accomplish its goals. The President himself asked if it was a bunch of bull—I will not say the word, but he said it—and they fired all of the officials who actually investigate waste, fraud, and abuse. And this bill is to gut the Council that sets the nonpartisan guidelines and ethical procedures for how that is done.

Now, let me ask the American people, does that seem sketchy as hell to all of you? Because it sure seems sketchy as hell to me. And that is why myself and the Democrats on this Committee oppose this bill, oppose the firing of the inspector generals, support the nonpartisan Federal officials who actually do this work day in and day out inside our Federal agencies, even as they have been under attack by this Administration every day.

And I just want to say, the hypocrisy. If you are so concerned about waste, fraud, and abuse, there is a vote today on the Floor for a reconciliation bill that the President has asked the Republicans to pass that would give a $95 billion blank check to the White House to continue to fund an illegal war in the Middle East. If you are so concerned about waste, fraud, and abuse, why are you not investigating why the President is repeatedly coming to Congress and asking for blank checks for the military, blank checks to terrorize our communities, blank checks to take away fundamental protections for food, for housing? If you really cared about waste, fraud, and abuse, why are you not investigating the waste-fraud-and-abuser-in-chief sitting in the White House who literally filed a financial disclosure just a couple of weeks ago saying that he made $2 billion off of the presidency while tearing apart our country and taking, basically, bribes through money laundering schemes, tearing apart our Federal Government?

[Applause.]

Ms. STANSBURY. What is this actually about? Why would you dismantle the oversight bodies that look into waste, fraud, and abuse, maintain ethical standards, and audit Federal behavior? The American people are smart. I think they can see what is going on. I yield back.

[Applause.]

Chairman COMER. All right. The gentlelady yields back.

When I became Chairman of the Oversight Committee, I was really excited about the opportunity to work with the Inspector General. I believe in the concept, but the biggest disappointment over the last four years has been the IGs and their lack of investigative curiosity, their lack of production. I mean, there are IGs that we have not even heard from the entire four years I have been here, and I think the IGs have gotten a little bit like the PBMs. They were created with good intentions, but they have fallen victim to just bureaucratic mediocrity.

And one of the most baffling Federal entities has been the Council of Inspector General on Integrity and Efficiency, or CIGIE. CIGIE was created to coordinate cross-agency investigations, provide support for IGs, and share best practices to help IG offices root out waste, fraud, and abuse. We all supported the concept, but CIGIE has ballooned into a bureaucratic mess that seeks to expand its power rather than do the job it was created to do. Some IGs have shared frustrations with being unable to get the assistance they need to investigate waste in their agencies—I know that was the case with several IGs we have had in front of this Committee—while others have shared that CIGIE has tried to get overly involved in their investigations.

CIGIE by statute has also been tasked with overseeing the Integrity Committee, the committee that reviews wrongdoing by Inspectors General and their senior staff. Rather than ensuring the IG community is above reproach, the Integrity Committee has conducted politicized investigations and refused to be transparent with Congress.

I see Ms. Stansbury left.

Further, the IC has consistently blown past the deadlines for conducting investigations required by law, in some cases, by as much as four years. This is simply unacceptable and, sadly, evidence of the larger problems within CIGIE. CIGIE has lost Congress' and the public's trust. That is why I support this bill because I believe it is time to end the Integrity Committee, and transferring CIGIE's core functions is a good start to restoring trust in the IG community.

Voice. [Inaudible.]

Chairman COMER. Well, I have been explaining the problems with the IGs and the lack of trust in CIGIE. This has become a bureaucratic mess. I compare it to the PBMs. I want strong IGs, but we have got IGs that just are not doing a good job, and it is very frustrating. It has been a big disappointment, and I appreciate the sponsor of the bill. Mr. Higgins has been a champion of this for several years, and, you know, I hope that we can create a situation where we have independent IGs that actually do something, that do not work from home and take years and years and years to get something done.

I will use the Post Office as an example. Everyone in here agrees the Post Office is a disaster, been a disaster for several years. And the Postal IG was in the office, and they are all the things that I would think we would agree the IG should look at—they are studying, I think it was Austria, how Austria operates their postal service? I mean, give me a break. We have got to have some reform within this, and I think that CIGIE has created a bureaucracy that is just in the way, kind of like the PBMs do with the pharmaceutical drugs now. So, I strongly encourage everyone to support this bill, and I appreciate the sponsor, Mr. Higgins.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Chairman, do you want to yield and discuss since you named me?

Chairman COMER. No. No. You——

Ms. STANSBURY. Okay. All right. Well, I came back so we can debate.

Chairman COMER. You got your time in.

Ms. STANSBURY. No, no, but you noted that I was not here, so I came back——

Chairman COMER. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Ms. STANSBURY [continuing]. So that we could have a good conversation.

Chairman COMER. All right. I am glad.

Ms. STANSBURY. Would you like to yield?

Chairman COMER. I hope you learned something.

Ms. STANSBURY. I learned that you all do not want to support accountability in the government.

Chairman COMER. No, not really. I appreciate you, Ms. Stansbury, and I think you are a good Member, but the solution to every problem seems like, from many on your side, is create another bureaucracy, hire some more people, you know, increase the bureaucracy, and it may sound good. It is just not working. It is just not working.

Ms. STANSBURY. No. I am anti-firing the cops who actually investigate fraud and crime.

Chairman COMER. I would argue that there is not a lot of fraud being investigated, and there has not been for several years.

Ms. STANSBURY. There has not been under the Republican Majority. That is correct.

Chairman COMER. But you are right, this government is ripe for fraud, and I do not disagree with a lot of what you are saying. I just think we have got to beef up the IG operations. It has gotten bureaucratic, and CIGIE is part of the problem. So, my time has expired. Any other Member seek recognition?

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman, I was going to ask you if you would yield time, but——

Chairman COMER. I will yield. It says I have got 45 seconds. I will yield back to you then.

Mr. HIGGINS. Well, it is insufficient, but let me say——

[Laughter.]

Mr. HIGGINS. It is not enough time, but let me say that I have never mentioned waste, fraud, abuse, and theft in this debate today. I am talking about fundamentally biased criminal justice procedure and weaponized prosecution coming out of CIGIE and the Integrity Committee, the star chamber within CIGIE. It is politicized. It is weaponized. Its rogue behavior is longstanding and proven, and it must be abolished. I yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. 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, say 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. 9725, as amendment.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, say no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. For what purpose——

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

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

H.R. 9643, THE COMMENT INTEGRITY AND MANAGEMENT ACT

Our next item for consideration is H.R. 9643, the Community Integrity and Management Act.

The clerk will please designate the bill.

The Clerk. H.R. 9643, the Comment Integrity and Management Act, a bill to amend Section 206 of the E-Government Act of 2002, to improve the integrity and management of mass comments and computer-generated comments in the regulatory review process, and for other purposes.

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

Without objection, so ordered.

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

The clerk will please designate the amendment.

The Clerk. An amendment and the nature of a substitute to H.R. 9643 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, Mr. Higgins from Louisiana, for an opening statement.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This bill amends Section 206 of the E-Government Act of 2002 to improve the management of electronic comments submitted during agency rulemaking. This is crucial.

We came to recognize this, ladies and gentlemen and Americans watching, a few years ago, and this was before AI. AI is a more recent phenomena, but a few years ago, we started noting that during the public comment time-frame of government projects, where it is our responsibility to listen to legitimate comment from we, the people, and the impacted citizenry, or citizenry that have an opinion on a government project have every right to register their comment and their opinion on that project, and there is a period of time that those comments are to be collected.

So, we started noting a few years ago that there seemed to be repetitive comments that were identical, and this was in the height of the digital age and the social media growth, and we found that many of these comments were coming from false profiles. It was like one guy creating many emails and sending the same comments. So, what this does, it compromises the integrity of the comment collection that should truly be considered based upon its actual numbers and intent. So, bottom line, without getting into the complex details of this bill, it requires some modicum of verification that a comment is coming from an actual human being, whereby the evaluation of those comments will more truly reflect the will of we, the people.

That is the bill in a nutshell, Mr. Chairman. We have been working on it for a long time. We have made amendments to the language in this Congress to address concerns of the Minority, which I appreciated that feedback and corroboration. We have included considerations for AI. For instance, if an American or a citizen or an actual human being posting a comment uses AI to help draft their comment, and yet the comment is actually born of an existing citizen or human being, then that should be allowed. So, we have made adjustments to this bill in the effort to pursue the true intention of the bill, which is to restore full integrity and accuracy to comments during the comment window for a government project so that we can effectively evaluate the will of we, the people.

So, we have done our best to accommodate the concerns of the minority. I appreciate their input. I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support the bill. I appreciate the Chairman for bringing this bill to markup, and I yield.

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

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the gentleman's work on this. As he noted, technology has made it easier for the public to comment on proposed agency rules, and that increased public participation is a good thing. It is a great thing. But there have been, in recent high-profile rulemakings, agencies receiving a very, very, very high number of repeat comments, which obviously creates challenges for agencies to get an accurate view of the public's perspective on a rule, and this bill is designed to help agencies manage mass comments and computer-generated comments submitted in response to proposed rules.

And I appreciate the gentleman working with the Minority. Unfortunately, we still have some concerns that we hope could be addressed. The bill fails to differentiate fully between spam comments and comments developed by a human being with the assistance of an AI tool. And look, people and businesses all over the country have already adopted AI to make their lives and their work more efficient and effective, and the public should not be penalized for using these support functions. And we continue to have concerns as well about how the Trump Administration would implement this particular piece of legislation given some actions they have taken to limit public comments. And while we would be open to supporting the bill, these concerns need to be addressed, and we would welcome the opportunity to continue to work with Mr. Higgins and the other side to make improvements to the bill. So, at this point, I have to urge my colleagues to vote no, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I recognize myself for 5 minutes, and I yield my time to Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. I thank the Chairman, and I appreciate the Ranking Member's consideration of the bill and his kind words regarding working with me. I would just clarify for the record that the concerns of the Minority were presented to me prior to this markup within a given time for us to consider the concerns of the Minority, and I communicated clearly that I would support an amendment. It seemed to me it was a thoughtful suggestion from the Minority regarding the allowance of AI as an assist mechanism for any citizen making their own individual comment on a government project.

I communicated to the Minority officially and clearly that I felt that that was a thoughtful suggestion, and if they would present that amendment, I would thank them for that amendment, I would support that amendment, and ultimately, that amendment would be included in this bill. However, this is the way this town works, America, they pulled the amendment because they want to oppose my bill. They want to oppose a Republican's bill that restores integrity and truthful count to the comments of a government project. Who would oppose that?

So, they had a concern. They voiced it. They communicated it, properly and professionally. My staff delivered it to me. I considered it. I said, you know what? That is a thoughtful suggestion. Have them draft an amendment reflective of this concern. I will support that amendment and markup. It will pass, and it will be included in the legislation. And I have been advised, since last night and today, that they have made a decision, the minority, nah, we are pulling that amendment. We are just going to oppose the bill.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Would the gentleman yield.

Mr. HIGGINS. I yield.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Higgins, and, you know, it sounds like——

Mr. HIGGINS. It is actually not my time. I yield back to the Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Yes, I yield back to——

Mr. WALKINSHAW. And he will yield to me.

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. All right.

Mr. HIGGINS. I am happy to yield for a question to the gentleman of the time that has been yielded to me by the Chairman.

Chairman COMER. It is Higgins' time.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. Yes. It sounds like in conversation with staff from both sides, there still needs to be a little bit of work and dialog on that, and certainly would be very happy to work with you before this bill gets to the Rules Committee or the Floor to try to make sure we can find a meeting spot.

Mr. HIGGINS. That, good sir, is a reasonable suggestion, and I accept it.

Mr. WALKINSHAW. All right. Thank you, sir.

Chairman COMER. See, we get along great in this Committee, despite what they put on TikTok and everything else, so very good. Any other Member seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, the question is now on the amendment in the nature——

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman, it is a unanimous consent request.

Chairman COMER. Yes, sir. Yes, sir, I recognize you.

Mr. HIGGINS. Unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter from the Administrative Conference of the United States on its recommendations that align with my bill, H.R. 9643.

Chairman COMER. Without objection, so ordered.

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

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, say no.

[No response.]

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

The question is now on favorably reporting H.R. 9643, as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, say no.

[Chorus of noes.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The bill is——

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. A record vote, sir.

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

Pursuant to the previous order, the Chair declares the Committee in recess, subject to the call of the Chair. We will plan to reconvene at 1:15 sharp.

The Committee stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman COMER. The Committee will come back to order. If we could please have order in here.

Before we begin the actual markup, I would like to welcome our newest Member to the Oversight Committee, Representative Christian Menefee from Texas. We are glad to have him on the Committee.

[Applause.]

Chairman COMER. And I am going to yield to Ranking Member Garcia to welcome Representative Menefee.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to also just welcome our newest Member to the Committee, Representative Christian Menefee, new to the Committee, but has already been in Congress and doing the work, and has already been working extremely hard on issues that relate to oversight and for his district. And, of course, we know that he is incredible in his experience and brings enormous knowledge as an attorney. He is a fighter. He is a local government leader, and, of course, he will be a great champion on Oversight. We are fortunate to have Christian. I think we have all gotten to know him in this Congress so far, and we want to welcome him to the Committee, but also to Oversight Democrats.

And so, congratulations, Christian, and welcome to Oversight.

[Applause.]

Chairman COMER. All right.

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman?

Chairman COMER. Yes, Mr. Burchett. Chairman Burchett.

Mr. BURCHETT. Why don't we yield about eight or nine seconds to him and let him tell us his life story?

[Laughter.]

Mr. BURCHETT. Right. You were not recognized yet. Hang on. The Chairman——

Chairman COMER. We will give him ten seconds. How about that?

Mr. BURCHETT. Very good.

Mr. MENEFEE. Happy to take, as a Member of Congress, two hours to give my life story. Congressman Christian Menefee. Got sworn in February 2. Excited to be on the Committee. Thank you all very much.

Chairman COMER. Welcome. All right. He is a keeper, yes.

[Applause.]

Chairman COMER. You may have just become our favorite Member on the other side.

[Laughter.]

Chairman COMER. Stay away from Walkinshaw and Jamie Raskin.

[Laughter.]

Chairman COMER. All right. We are going to go ahead and vote. We will leave this first one open a little longer to make sure everybody is here, but the question is on favorably reporting H.R. 6610. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system.

The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 6610, the Pharmacists Fight Back Act.

[Voting.]

Chairman COMER. We are sprinting, en route, and I have seen him work out. I have seen him work out. He can sprint.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. She may have been sprinting, too, but it was not the Member I was thinking of, but we were holding it open for you, Ms. Randall.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. There is another Member running in. Come in. We are waiting for you.

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. Another sprinter. All right. This is a bipartisan delay here.

[Laughter.]

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. See, I waited for you, Ms. Stansbury.

Ms. STANSBURY. You did a great job. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. You would have waited for me, right?

Ms. STANSBURY. Absolutely.

[Laughter.]

[Pause.]

Chairman COMER. This is the sprinter we were waiting on. The guy works out. He is a beast. The President always references his win-loss record in Division I wrestling.

All right. 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 2.

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

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

Next up, the question is on favorably reporting H.R. 9720. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system.

The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 9720, the D.C. Taxing Authority Review Act.

[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. Mr. Langworthy. Got it?

Have all Members been recorded?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Any Member wish to change their vote?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, 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 18.

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

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

Next up, the question is on favorably reporting H.R. 9725. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system.

The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 9725, Restoring Integrity and Efficiency to Our Inspector General Oversight Act of 2025.

[Voting.]

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

[Pause.]

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

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. Seeing none, 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 20.

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

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

Next up—the question is on favorably reporting H.R. 9643. Members will record their votes using the electronic voting system.

The clerk will now open the vote on favorably reporting H.R. 9643, Comment Integrity and Management Act.

[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 will close the vote and report the vote total.

The Clerk. Mr. Chairman, on this vote, the ayes are 24. The nays are 19.

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

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

H.R.s 8999, 9026, 7365, 8359, 8945, 6006, 4283, 8419, 9570, and 8326

POSTAL NAMING MEASURES

Next up, pursuant to notice, I now call up the follow en bloc postal-naming bills, which were distributed in advance on this markup: H.R.s 8999, 9026, 7365, 8359, 8945, 6006, 4283, 8419, 9570, and 8326.

Without objection, the en bloc package is considered read.

If any Member would like to speak on any of these measures, they may do so now. Mr. Palmer from Alabama.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last year, my colleague, Shomari Figures, and I, from Alabama, celebrated the life of Lieutenant Colonel George Hardy, the last surviving combat pilot of the Tuskegee Airmen. He passed away at the age of 100. In his lifetime, he alone served in three wars and became the youngest Tuskegee Airman fighter pilot to fly his first solo combat mission over Europe at the age of 19. The contributions he and his fellow Tuskegee Airmen made to our country as the first African-American military aviators changed the course of World War II and our Nation's history. The Tuskegee Airmen flew over 15,000 missions, earning over 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses for service contributing to the Allied victory, and paved the way for desegregation of the military.

That is why I am honored today to pay tribute to the service of the Tuskegee Airmen by speaking in support of H.R. 6006, which was sponsored by my colleague, Representative Figures. The bill would rename the North Elm Street Post Office in Tuskegee, Alabama, as the Tuskegee Airman Memorial Post Office. At the Tuskegee Army Airfield, the program trained nearly a thousand African-American pilots, mechanics, and other servicemen, who were known as the Red Tails. It is only fitting that we honor their legacy in the very city of Tuskegee, Alabama to pay tribute to their extraordinary contributions to this country. The recognition ensures that their sacrifice, bravery, and historic contributions to our Nation will not ever be forgotten.

I thank my colleague, Representative Figures, for his leadership on this bill, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Any other Member seek recognition? Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. I commend Representative Figures for introducing this bill. Congress and the executive branch must continue to find ways to honor the Tuskegee Airmen. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill. Thank you.

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

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a statement from Congresswoman Jen Kiggans of Virginia, the sponsor of H.R. 7365.

Without objection, so ordered.

Any other Member seek recognition?

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. The question is now on favorably reporting the en bloc package.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Chairman COMER. All those opposed, say no.

[No response.]

Chairman COMER. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it, and the en bloc is 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 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 Committee print, 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. Thank you all.

[Whereupon, at 1:38 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

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