

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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MEMORANDUM

April 1, 2022

To: Members of the Committee on Oversight and Reform

Fr: Committee Staff

Re: Committee Business Meeting

On Wednesday, April 6, 2022, at 10:30 a.m. ET, in room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building and over Zoom, the Committee on Oversight and Reform will hold a hybrid business meeting to consider the following:

1. H.R. 1756, the Measuring Real Income Growth Act;
2. H.R. 6531, the Targeting Resources to Communities in Need Act of 2022;
3. H.R. 6967, the Chance to Compete Act;
4. H.R. _____, the Honoring Civil Servants Killed in the Line of Duty Act;
5. H.R. 5815, the Honest Census Communications Act;
6. H.R. 7185, the Federal Contracting for Peace and Security Act;
7. H.R. 3544, the Computers for Veterans and Students (COVS) Act;
8. H.R. 7337, the Access for Veterans to Records Act; and
9. Several postal naming measures.

I. H.R. 1756, THE MEASURING REAL INCOME GROWTH ACT

A. Summary

The Measuring Real Income Growth Act (H.R. 1756) was introduced by Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney on March 10, 2021. It would direct the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) at the Department of Commerce to report gross domestic product (GDP) growth by

income decile and for the highest 1% of income earners. BEA releases annual and quarterly GDP reports.

In 2019, Congress passed an appropriations bill that directed BEA to publish a prototype statistical report showing U.S. personal income by decile, and BEA produced this report in 2020 and 2021. H.R. 1756 would codify the disaggregated reporting requirement, providing long-term data that more accurately conveys how economic growth is affecting households across the income spectrum.

B. Amendments

An amendment in the nature of a substitute (ANS) will be offered.

Staff contact: Christina Parisi

II. H.R. 6531, THE TARGETING RESOURCES TO COMMUNITIES IN NEED ACT OF 2022

A. Summary

The Targeting Resources to Communities in Need Act (H.R. 6531) was introduced by Reps. Jim Clyburn and Hal Rogers on February 1, 2022. This bill would increase federal funding for areas of persistent poverty.

H.R. 6531 defines an area of persistent poverty as one that experiences high poverty at the census tract or county level. A high-poverty census tract is one in which the poverty rate is at least 20%, according to the American Community Survey. Likewise, a county (or county equivalent) with a poverty rate of at least 20% according to the Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, over the past 25 years (and for the most recent year available), would be considered a high poverty county.

The bill would require the Census Bureau to publish an annual list of areas of persistent poverty. The bill would also require the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to issue guidance on methods to increase targeted federal investments to areas of high and persistent poverty. The guidance must establish a federal investment goal to achieve levels of investment beyond what the population of census tracts and counties would merit.

OMB would be required to submit a report to Congress detailing a list of federal programs included in the investment effort, the amount of funds directed to those federal programs, the percent change in federal program funds available from the previous fiscal year, and an assessment of the programs' economic impacts—disaggregated by demographic categories.

B. Amendments

An ANS will be offered.

Staff contact: Courtney Miller

III. H.R. 6967, THE CHANCE TO COMPETE ACT

A. Summary

The Chance to Compete Act (H.R. 6967), was introduced by Reps. Jody Hice, Ro Khanna, Virginia Foxx, and Kweisi Mfume on March 8, 2022. The companion bill, S. 3423, was introduced by Senator Kyrsten Sinema and was reported favorably by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. The bipartisan bill would overhaul the evaluations used by federal agencies to assess the skills of job candidates by tasking agency subject matter experts with designing assessments that test knowledge specific to a position for which the agency is hiring.

The bill would also direct the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to create an online tool for agencies to share and modify these technical assessments, as well as a process for hiring managers to see applicants who established their qualifications for a position, but were ultimately not hired. This would increase the pool of qualified candidates for an open position and eliminate the candidate's need to repeat the certification process before being considered for a comparable position.

OPM would also manage a publicly available, periodically updated website that describes the type of assessment required for competitive service positions and the status of that position. OPM would submit annual reports on the use of assessments to fill competitive service positions.

The bill builds on a pilot hiring program started during the Trump Administration and continued through the U.S. Digital Service aimed at hiring data science specialists in the federal government. Currently, self-administered assessments are commonly used to rank prospective employees for government positions, and qualifications for a position are largely judged based on resumé items and education level. Shifting to a more skills-based assessment can open up government employment opportunities to applicants from diverse professional backgrounds and education levels.

B. Amendments

An ANS will be offered.

Staff contact: Christina Parisi

IV. H.R. ____, THE HONORING CIVIL SERVANTS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY ACT

A. Summary

The Honoring Civil Servants Killed in the Line of Duty Act will be introduced by Subcommittee on Government Operations Chairman Gerald Connolly prior to the markup. A companion bill, S. 3487, was introduced by Senator Kyrsten Sinema and was reported favorably by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

The bill would set a required standard death gratuity payment at \$100,000 plus \$8,800 for funeral expenses, with adjustments for inflation, for civil service employees who are killed in the line of duty or die as a result of an injury sustained at work. The maximum death gratuity permitted under current law is \$10,000 and funeral expenses can be reimbursed up to \$800, but the payment amounts families receive are at the discretion of the employing agency.

Between 2012 and 2015, there was an average of 24 civilian deaths in the line of duty per year. This bill would ensure that families of federal employees killed on the job are compensated more fairly, and that the gratuity is standardized across agencies. The current maximum gratuity levels have been in place for decades, and these increases will better align the gratuities for civil servants with those currently paid to families of military members and foreign service officers killed in the line of duty.

In the event that the employee is eligible for multiple death gratuities, the bill clarifies that only the equivalent of one gratuity should be paid out. The bill includes an emergency appropriations authorization to respond to the occurrence of an event that results in the deaths of many U.S. government employees.

B. Amendments

An ANS will be offered.

Staff contact: Christina Parisi

V. H.R. 5815, THE HONEST CENSUS COMMUNICATIONS ACT

A. Summary

The Honest Census Communications Act (H.R. 5815) was introduced by Rep. Anna Eshoo and Chairwoman Maloney on November 2, 2021. The bill would prohibit certain deceptive practices in relation to a census.

The bill defines a covered communication as a written communication, electronic or digital communication (i.e., website, application, online forum, social media platform, streaming service, or other means of communications using the internet or similar network) and telephonic

communication (i.e., phone call, text message, or other communication relayed using a phone or phone network).

The bill prohibits communications that are relayed knowing the census-related information is materially false, and communications intended to stop or delay a person's participation in any census. The bill establishes civil and criminal penalties for the communications prohibited by this legislation.

B. Amendments

An ANS will be offered.

Staff contact: Courtney Miller

VI. H.R. 7185, THE FEDERAL CONTRACTING FOR PEACE AND SECURITY ACT

A. Summary

The Federal Contracting for Peace and Security Act (H.R. 7185) was introduced by Chairwoman Maloney on March 21, 2022. The introduction followed Russia's unprovoked invasion of the peaceful country of Ukraine, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's direct address to Congress, in which he stated, "All American companies must leave Russia from their market—leave their market immediately, because it is flooded with our blood."¹

The bill would establish that it is the policy of the U.S. government not to conduct business with companies that continue to operate in Russia during its ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine. It would prohibit federal agencies from entering into contracts with companies conducting business operations in Russia, and would require the termination of existing contracts with such companies, with termination proceedings to be initiated within 30 days of enactment.

These prohibition and termination requirements would not apply to the procurement of goods or services for the benefit of Ukraine or for humanitarian purposes to meet basic human needs. Agency heads would also be permitted to waive the prohibition and termination requirements upon written certification to the President that doing so is in the national interest of the United States. The agency head would also be required to provide the written certification to Congress at least seven days before issuing the waiver.

The prohibition and termination requirements would remain in effect until the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury jointly determine that they should be lifted based on steps taken by Russia to restore the safety and sovereignty of Ukraine.

¹ *Annotated Transcript: Zelensky's Speech to Congress*, New York Times (Mar. 16, 2022) (online at www.nytimes.com/2022/03/16/us/politics/transcript-zelensky-speech.html).

B. Amendments

The Chairwoman will offer an ANS. Among other things, the ANS will clarify that the prohibition and termination requirements would take effect upon enactment and would not apply retroactively.

Staff contact: Emily Burns

VII. H.R. 3544, THE COMPUTERS FOR VETERANS AND STUDENTS (COVS) ACT

A. Summary

The Computers for Veterans and Students (COVS) Act (H.R. 3544) was introduced by Reps. Abigail Spanberger, Rob Wittman, and Elaine Luria on May 25, 2021.

According to the Census Bureau, only 78% of households in the United States owned a desktop or laptop in 2018.² Millions of students and workers lacked access to internet-connected computers and technology equipment during the coronavirus pandemic. Disparities in internet use, quality of access, and computer skills prevented many from doing schoolwork, working remotely, or connecting with their loved ones and communities.³

To address these disparities, the COVS Act would require the General Services Administration (GSA) to transfer federal agencies' surplus computers and information technology equipment to nonprofit computer refurbishers that primarily work to close the digital divide. Such refurbishers would be required to repair and distribute the equipment to educational institutions, veterans, individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, students, or seniors in need.

The bill would also require nonprofit computer refurbishers in receipt of surplus equipment to offer training programs on the use of computers and technology equipment to affected individuals. The GSA Administrator would be required to report to Congress on these efforts, and agencies would be required to make reports available to the public on the number of repairable computers distributed, recycled, abandoned, or destroyed.

B. Amendments

The Chairwoman will offer an ANS.

Staff contacts: Emily Burns and Simone Herndon

² Census Bureau, *Press Release: Computer and Internet Use in the United States: 2018* (Apr. 21, 2021) (online at www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/computer-internet-use.html).

³ Elisabeth Beaunoyer, et al., *COVID-19 and Digital Inequalities: Reciprocal Impacts and Mitigation Strategies*, *Computers in Human Behavior* (Oct. 2020) (online at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7213963/).

VIII. H.R. 7337, THE ACCESS FOR VETERANS TO RECORDS ACT

A. Summary

The Access for Veterans to Records Act was introduced by Chairwoman Maloney and Subcommittee on National Security Chairman Stephen F. Lynch on March 31, 2022.

The bill would help eliminate the current backlog of veteran records requests at the National Personnel Records Center, an office of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). According to NARA, the backlog currently stands at approximately 600,000 requests. Veterans and their families need these records to access crucial services like healthcare and housing. The pandemic and reduced workforce, combined with the fact that most of these records are not digitized, increased this backlog.

According to NARA, an increase in funding would help the agency update outdated information technology systems, modernize its electronic records archive, and increase the speed and efficiency of NARA responses to Freedom of Information Act and special access requests for records.

The bill would require NARA to submit a plan for eliminating the backlog with target timeframes to the Committee, and would authorize \$60 million for NARA to digitize and preserve records and improve the records request process.

B. Amendments

An ANS will be offered.

Staff contacts: Ethan VanNess and Daina Robinson

IX. POSTAL NAMING MEASURES

- H.R. 1095, “To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 101 South Willowbrook Avenue in Compton, California, as the ‘PFC James Anderson, Jr., Post Office Building.’”
- H.R. 4622, “To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 226 North Main Street in Roseville, Ohio, as the ‘Ronald E. Rosser Post Office.’”
- H.R. 5809, “To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1801 Town and Country Drive in Norco, California, as the ‘Lance Corporal Kareem Nikoui Memorial Post Office Building.’”
- H.R. 5349, “To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1550 State Road S-38-211 in Orangeburg, South Carolina, as the ‘J.I. Washington Post Office Building.’”

- H.R. 5865, “To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4110 Bluebonnet Drive in Stafford, Texas, as the ‘Leonard Scarcella Post Office Building.’”
- H.R. 5900, “To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2016 East 1st Street in Los Angeles, California, as the ‘Marine Corps Reserve PVT Jacob Cruz Post Office.’”
- H.R. 6039, “To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 501 Charles Street in Beaufort, South Carolina, as the ‘Harriet Tubman Post Office Building.’”
- H.R. 6041, “To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10 Bow Circle in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, as the ‘Charles E. Fraser Post Office Building.’”
- H.R. 6042, “To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 213 William Hilton Parkway in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, as the “Caesar H. Wright Jr. Post Office Building.””
- H.R. 6175, “To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 135 West Wisconsin Street in Russell, Kansas, as the ‘Robert J. Dole Memorial Post Office Building.’”
- H.R. 6614, “To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4744 Grand River Avenue in Detroit, Michigan, as the ‘Rosa Louise McCauley Parks Post Office Building.’”
- H.R. 6917, “To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 301 East Congress Parkway in Crystal Lake, Illinois, as the ‘Ryan J. Cummings Post Office Building.’”

X. AMENDMENT PROCESS

Committee Rule 2(g) authorizes the chair of the Committee to prioritize the consideration of amendments filed 24 hours in advance of the consideration of matters before the Committee or subcommittees. Pursuant to this rule, and at the chair’s discretion, the Committee may consider amendments that are pre-filed with the Committee clerk prior to amendments offered at a markup.

Members should pre-file amendments with the clerk of the Committee by emailing a searchable, electronic PDF copy of the amendment prepared by the House Legislative Counsel to Oversight_Clerks@mail.house.gov and to Christina Parisi at Christina.Parisi@mail.house.gov at least 24 hours before the scheduled start of the business meeting. Members should include in the email accompanying the amendment text:

1. The name(s) of the Member(s) who will offer the amendment;
2. The name and number of the measure to be amended;
3. A brief, one-sentence description of the amendment; and
4. The name and phone number of a staff member who will serve as the point of contact for the amendment.

Pre-filed amendments will be compiled into a single roster, and the roster will be made available to Committee members prior to business meetings. Any amendment to a measure or matter before the Committee or a subcommittee should be germane to the measure or matter, including in scope, subject matter, and Committee consideration. Votes on amendments likely will be grouped together at a time determined by the chair, pursuant to Committee Rules.