

House Rules preps Financial Services and General Government; Interior-Environment; Energy and Water; Agriculture, Rural Development & FDA Appropriations for Floor Action

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Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Let's get everyone to take their seats and call the Rules Committee to order the state aid. General from informational observation first, since we have Chairman Cole, back with us in the Rules Committee, Chairman Cole and Chairman sessions before him, reclaimed their artwork and left the walls relatively barren. In the Rules Committee. I tried to work with the Library of Congress about getting some prints.

But it's a fairly involved process to get actual artwork. But these are open access prints that were obtained for virtually no money, so the appropriators will, will like that, but I didn't want my tenure as Rules Committee to be remembered as the walls without artwork. So I hope that it meets with everyone's approval, and I'll ask one to make available to everyone just a brief description of the of the artists that for from whom we borrowed the borrowed the prints, I also just have to say a word. We lost members of Texas delegation over the last week, Sheila Jackson Lee, obviously been a member for a long time and a very frequent visitor to the Rules Committee.

And I know we'll, we'll all miss her and certainly have her her family and our thoughts and prayers as as we go through these next few weeks here. With that stuff to today's hearing, we're closing in on four years of the Biden administration, four years since we sat here, sometimes virtually to gavel in the 100 and 17th. Congress, and then a new administration. Upon reflection, what has happened over the last four years, can be summed up in one word, that word is debt.

Under the Biden administration's philosophy of tax and spend our way out of a global pandemic, the federal government has undergone a drastic transformation and an expansion that has impacted every American life and every American pocketbook as a result of the President's pa overseas more than \$7 trillion new federal debt has been thrust upon future generations, wages have been crushed under the effects of inflation. And the net interest expense on our federal debt is projected to double from what we were paying when President Biden took the oath of office. And what do the American people have to show for this, a massive expansion of government at a regulatory burden, and an all out assault on domestic energy and resource production, especially in states like Texas and Oklahoma, an onslaught of rules and regulations and requirements that have increased the cost of doing business by hundreds of billions of dollars. This is why American, the American people chose House Republicans to provide an important check on the excesses of the congressional Democrats of this administration.

Today, we're carrying through on that responsibility. The appropriations bills before us recognize that what's occurred before cannot continue. The nice to haves do not square with the unstable debt burden that Congress is placing on future generations. The fiscal year 2025 agriculture, energy and water.

Financial Services Interior Appropriations bills represent a dramatic redirecting of resources towards where they're most needed with thank the members of the appropriations Committee for working so hard on these these bills, right size federal agencies to work within the American people's means to resource them. In addition to knocking these agencies down to size, these bills also refocus federal bureaucracies on their core mission, and abandoning the OLC idealism for focused service. The American people have entrusted us with ensuring that the federal government buckles down, and as they are expected to do in this economic environment, American families are making targeted reductions, eliminating waste and prioritizing important expenses every day. The four bills before us today mirror what is happening at dinner tables and kitchen tables across the country since Biden entered the White House.

And with that, I want to recognize my esteemed fellow member and my friend Ranking Member, Mr. McGovern for any comments he wishes to make.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for bringing artwork back to the Rules Committee. I'm told this is the artists here is a guy named Edward Bannister who actually lived in Massachusetts was a fighter for equal rights in the Boston area, and a prominent African American artist. And so I feel a connection to Massachusetts with this.

So thank you very much for doing that. I also want to thank you for your kind words about our colleague, Sheila Jackson Lee. She was an incredible leader in this House, a fighter for women's rights and civil rights and human rights. And I was up here many times, as you mentioned, we're always fighting for our constituents.

And, and she will be, she was a giant in this in this House of Representatives, and she will be missed. I also want to take a moment to reflect on the awful events that happened in Butler, Pennsylvania, just over a week ago. There's absolutely no place for violence in our country or in our politics. And I'm grateful that former President Trump is okay.

But I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for reaching out and working on a joint bipartisan statement in which we both strongly condemned the terrible violence that occurred and reiterated our commitment to making sure we live in a country where that kind of violence is not acceptable. And so I thank you very, very much for that. But today, we are set to meet on for appropriation bills. For more no good, divisive funding bills filled to the brim with more Maga garbage.

The Chairman opened up talking about the debt. I had to do a reality check because the debt was blown up under the previous administration. And it was hardly a mention of that. In the Rules Committee, when we dealt with the funding priorities of former President Trump.

In fact, President Biden has put out a budget to reduce reduce the debt by three \$3 trillion over the next 10 years. And, you know, we never had that kind of effort put forward by the previous administration. So I think if we want to talk about the deficit of debt, we ought to talk about it when there are Democratic administrations and when there were Republican administrations but to be selective. It grows a little bit tiresome, but we have an agriculture appropriation bill that cuts funding For food banks, harming our rural communities and making hunger worse in this country.

We have an energy and water funding bill that is before us that provides more giveaways for big polluters and includes polarizing culture war riders, like preventing the renaming of places that commit commemorate the Confederacy. The interior and environment appropriation bill, guts funding for national parks, allows for more offshore drilling, and reinforces right wing attacks on the LGBT Qi A plus community. And then we have the financial services funding bill. This bill continues, the GOP is quest to ban abortion and IVF it sides with billionaires and big corporations making it easier for them to continue price gouging and selling dangerous products that put our kids at risk.

And this bill actually makes our elections less secure. I mean, for all the other sides talk about voter fraud. This bill doesn't include a single diamond Funding for Election security grants. Give me a break.

The GOP can't claim to worry about the outcome of our elections, if they are not willing to put money where their mouth is to ensure the fairness of our elections. Look, the simple truth is that these bills symbolize Republicans commitment to deeply unpopular and extreme measures in line with Project 2025 Their dystopian plan to consolidate power and the presidency, and exercise total control over our country and our lives. If Trump and MAGA Republicans win in November, they promised to get the checks and balances that protect our freedoms, advance abortion bans in every state, and give big corporations billions of dollars, while increasing taxes for middle class families policies furthered by these appropriation bills. So with that, I want to thank the witnesses for joining us here today.

I want to welcome back the former Chairman of the Rules Committee, and I want to apologize to them for the majority, making them testify and bills that will never become law. So with that, I yield back my time to Chair.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Thanks, gentlemen. Without objection, any prepared statements our witnesses have will be included in the record. And I want to welcome our first panel. Chairman Cole, so good to see you back in the Rules Committee.

I've missed you more than you could No. Chairman Fleischmann and Ranking Member Marcy Kaptur and Ranking Member Steny Hoyer, all from the Committee on appropriations. Chairman Cole, I understand you're here to speak on Department of Interior Appropriations. So I welcome your testimony.

Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.)

Chairman Burgess Ranking Member. Also were spins I was hearing Thank you. The bill also found my place. Bill also received \$55 million in funding provided to the Presidio Trust through the Inflation Reduction Act.

In drafting this bill, the Committee worked hard to rein in federal spending while prioritizing critical needs within the allocation. The bill fully funds payments in lieu of taxes estimated at \$600,000,000.80 \$5 million increase over last year, and provides over 330 million in part to permanently address federal wildlife firefighter pay without using irresponsible budgetary gimmicks. This legislation also makes critical investments in Indian country, a long standing bipartisan priority for the Committee. The bill provides a 14.5% increase for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and a 7.5% increase for the Bureau of Indian Education.

The Indian Health Service Act is increased by \$1.6 billion to fully fund current services for key health care programs and to cover contract support costs that were generated by a new Supreme Court decision. The bill also provides the advanced appropriations for service for FY 26 to fully fund these programs. And the bill reduces funding for nearly every other appropriation in the Bill, including a 20% reduction to the Environment Protection Agency. To advance us energy and mineral independence.

The bill includes several policies to rein in the administration's regulatory agenda and promote domestic energy production, such as halting the EPA heavy handed job killing rules that target reliable energy sources and domestic manufacturing, limiting the abuse of the Endangered Species Act, expanding access to critical minerals, and requiring oil and gas lease sales and blocking fees on producers. HR 8998, strong bill that promotes US energy independence, limits the administration's regulatory agenda and ensures access to our public lands, and it rains in unnecessary federal spending to put our economy on track to recover. Chairman Simpson wished to note the thanks in particular Ranking Member Pingree for her collaboration this year. And I'd like to thank the rules Committee for the opportunity to testify today.

I'd be happy to take questions on HR 8998. Thank you very much.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

And thank you for your testimony of Ranking Member Kaptur, you're recognized.

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member McGovern. It's a pleasure to be with you and thank you for your work, Chairman, bridges on the artwork. They're particularly pastoral renderings, and I'm sure in this Committee you need that keeps people kind of little calm. So I'm actually doing this on behalf of our very able colleague Chellie Pingree who is caught in the air confusion around this country or airline confusion, and I think has made it as far as Philadelphia she's trying to get here.

And I know she could do a much better job than I and I will be very brief in terms of her priorities on behalf of Ranking Member Pingree. I quickly mentioned democratic concerns with this interior bill, and these include slashing the Environmental Protection Agency by 20% \$1.8 billion. That's a very large reduction. Also, the bill curtails the progress that has been made to ensure that all people are equally protected from environmental and health hazards.

The bill also negatively impacts our constituents by cutting funds for the Smithsonian, and the arts. And we hope that as these bills move forward, especially this one that that will be restored. Additionally, the bill includes 90 to 92 Poison Pill writers that cripple environmental protection, undermine climate change policies, and add to the national deficit. Ranking Member Pingree urges opposition to the bill which harms the health and well being of American families.

And I yield back. Thank you.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Thank you for your testimony. Chairman Fleischmann, you're recognized.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member govern and, like member Kaptur, members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify. Before you today. I'm pleased to present to the Rules Committee, the fiscal 2025 Energy and Water Development and related agencies appropriation bill. This bill reflects our continuing commitment to our national security, energy security and economic competitiveness.

The recommendation totals \$59.2 billion, an increase of nearly \$1 billion in fiscal year 2024 and a reduction of 139 million below President Biden's budget request. The bill delivers strong support for national defense and provides 25 point 5 billion for the National Nuclear Security Administration to ensure a strong nuclear deterrent. At the Department of Energy, the bill supports programs that advance our nation's energy security and ensure America remains at the forefront of scientific discovery and innovation. This includes strong funding for nuclear energy, including additional funds specifically for nuclear demonstration projects, the Office of Science, including Fusion Energy Sciences, and the full spectrum of mining production technologies to reduce our reliance on foreign sources of critical minerals.

The bill also includes a number of provisions to protect American resources and intellectual property from falling into the hands of foreign adversaries. Funding for the Corps of Engineers totals at \$9.96 billion, including full funding of the harbor maintenance trust fund activities and the highest priorities. Ongoing inland waterways trust fund construction projects to win Sure the safe and efficient flow of commerce. Funding for the Bureau of Reclamation totals 1.93 mil billion prioritized projects that increase water supply and support drought resilience.

This is a strong bill, and respectfully acid Committee provide an appropriate role for its consideration. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear today. I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Thank you Fleischmann. I think, Mr. Lawyer, we're going to hear testimony on your panel after this panel. Is that correct? Okay.

Which case I'll go to. I'll open the questions on on our side. Man, Chairman flash, and let me just ask you, under the subject as a strategic petroleum reserve, which in the fall of 2022, was oh, I beg your pardon. Ranking Member Kaptur, you want to testify on energy water.

Please go ahead.

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Burgess, very, very much. Ranking Member McGovern, and members of the rules Committee, to my partner on the Committee. Congressman Fleischmann, it's always a pleasure to work with you.

And I, we're just happy to be here at the Committee. We're happy to be at this place. And let me begin with these facts. After World War Two, our country had a population of about 146 million people.

Today, that population has risen to about 325 330 million people. And by 2050, it is expected to go over 400 million people, we cannot behave as though it is 1946. And our energy and water systems undergird our way of life. A lot of times people don't see them.

They don't realize how accustomed we become to them. But sadly, the bill before us that the Republican side of the aisle has prepared does not meet our nation's imperative for the future. For the future. We're sort of putting glue and paper clips on things right now.

But this bill slow walks our nation's obligation to assure modern, dependable, affordable energy and clean water for millions and millions of our citizens and the millions more that are to come, and thus fails to embrace a more secure future for the country. This energy and water bill cuts \$1.5 billion or 43%. From the Department of Energy's energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. We can think of so many ways that we could do things better in our country.

And maybe some of you have driven through the countryside or cities. And when there's a more air conditioning required, you see the line sagging, that's a sign of an old system. We have very aging nuclear power plants all over this country. Some are shut down.

Most of them are at least 50 years of age. And we have to move into a new energy age we do. Congressman Fleischmann and I have had many discussions about this safety, as well as efficiency moving forward, we have overheating of aging, energy generation systems. So energy efficiency and renewable energy are critically important.

This bill revokes \$8 billion from the Department of Energy's loan programs. When you develop a new technology, let's just take solar because my region is a leading solar manufacturer, domestic solar manufacturer in this country, the inventor of the technologies, the Department of Energy didn't even know these people were from Toledo, Ohio, you know, it's not a place everybody goes right. But great things happen there. And what happened there was the birth of the finest solar company in our nation.

But they couldn't get financing because we don't have angel investors. We don't have you know, some of those folks that exist in other places that fun things. We don't have a national lab, but the genius of local people produce this. So too.

I wish the energy loan programs had existed back then in the form they do today to help these advancing technologies move forward. The bill also slashes The Weatherization Assistance Program, resulting in approximately 54,000 fewer low income homes receiving weatherization services over the years just in my home community of Toledo. Our weatherization program has retrofit now over 40,000 homes. Can you imagine the energy that that saves and the bills that people don't have to pay?

So let me be clear the cuts in this Bill will absolutely jeopardize innovation to achieve American energy independence. And that is our goal. We're close, but not in perpetuity. These cuts will hurt us competitiveness and domestic manufacturing.

And these cuts will increase energy costs for millions of our fellow citizens, including families and seniors struggling to make ends meet in other areas of this bill. I'm concerned how this bill cuts nuclear Non Proliferation programs that reduce nuclear risks and counter the global challenge of nuclear proliferation, which is real. Finally, the bill includes numerous controversial poison pill writers that sadly show the majority is not interested in bills that can gain bipartisan support and become law. America's future relies on the New Age frontiers of energy and water.

We look at biofuels 10% of every tank right now, probably going up to 15. I'm told that John Deere has just invented a 100% ethanol tractor. Can you imagine that? In thermal recapture, the wasted thermal energy under the ground we wasted for century now, wave and wind power.

I've mentioned advanced nuclear and also hydrogen, the Chairman mentioned fusion, we have so much we can do with proper investment. And we should fully know that a bipartisan compromise is the only available avenue to finalize these bills America can and must do better. And I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill. And I thank you.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Thank you for your testimony. Again, we'll go to the q&a part of the of the hearing and Mr. Fleishman. Chairman Fleischmann, I'll come back to you on the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. On there's obviously an increase proposed in the budget for I guess that's replacing the strategic petroleum reserves that was drawn down in the fall of 22 in order to prevent a political disaster, not a natural disaster, but a political disaster.

Not the purpose of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. But nevertheless, it was used for that purpose. So are we now having to budget to replace those barrels of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is that when I see that increase in the budget on the SPR, is that? Is that why that's occurring?

Yes,

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Mr. Chairman, as you're aware, under the previous administration, the company's strategic oil reserve was in very good shape was purchased at a very low level. Current administration, sadly, it has been depleted. And yes, these funds are being used to restore that.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

So I guess it's gonna sound overly simplistic, but what happened to the dollars from those petroleum that was sold out of the SPR in the fall of 22?

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Mr. Chairman, I don't know what happened with those dollars, that was a decision by this administration to use those reserves. I think you'll advisedly, but that was something that the administration did, and of course, as a reserve, when you replenish it, and you have to replenish it at a higher price. It's to the detriment of the nation, once again, in my view in the previous administration, it was full at a good price for the American people.

But I don't know what reason the administration did this. But we felt the need to replenish the reserve to get it there for its intended purpose.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

You know, in July of 2020, Senator Cornyn and I had a bill to allow for increased purchases for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve when oil was under \$30 a barrel. Almost seems brilliant. Now, as I reflect back on that, unfortunately, it could not pass the Democratic House or the Democratic, controlled Senate. Well, I hope you're paying attention to that.

And there's a risk of keeping those caverns depleted. The integrity of the caverns where the oil is stored, may decay over time, because of the product being moved out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. And you and I have worked a lot on nuclear energy. And I know and appreciate the suggestion for increased investment.

But we also need to work on the efficiency of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. And I know you've heard the same things that I've heard. Yes, that falls on the shoulders of the humble authorizers and will actually have an opportunity to talk about that in Committee this week. And, and, and I hope to do so, but can you speak to how you are working with the NRC to try to increase the efficiency of the regulatory body so that those dollars are more wisely spent?

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Absolutely. And I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that question. Nuclear power has been safe in America, and will continue to be safe in America as we go forward. Matter of fact, the new designs that are out there, which we actually promote and preserve in these bills, where they're funding for the advanced demonstration projects where there's a generation three generation four reactors, the fields are infinitely safe, their designs are safe, it's moving in the right direction.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, in my view, has been lethargic. We have got to move forward and start getting more designs approved in a more expeditious manner. In my view, they are very careful, they are safe, and we want them to be safe. But other countries are looking at us and say what is the reason for their lethargy, and I just don't know.

I know many of the commissioners. In fact, I know the Chairman very nice gentleman. But they're too slow. It is set up currently, Mr. Chairman as a fee for use.

So they do not receive an annual appropriation if someone is going to use their services. They pay for those. But we need to work and I hope the authorizers work, to move them to move in a much more swift fashion, and a much more nuclear friendly, logical reaction to get things out there. Our Distinguished Chairman, former Chairman of this great Committee, and now an outstanding Chairman of the full Committee, Mr. Cohen, I had the privilege of being in Eastern Europe, we were in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland recently, and these countries are looking for American nuclear and American nuclear designs for the NRC.

To do its job correctly, we want to make sure that they move forward, because the rest of the world not only our adversaries in Russia and China, moving forward with this, but our friends, the French, South Koreans, I saw a story the other day, the friend said well lead new nuclear to us America. Well, we're not going to do that. I think American ingenuity has it throughout our great nation, moves us in a direction to not only compete and beat the world, but NRC is going to have to start moving in a much, much swifter pace.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

I thank you for that. I'll yield back and recognize the Ranking Member of the Rules Committee.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Look, I'm not going to pretend that any of these bills before us today are going to become law. And what's frustrating to me is it seems like the extremists have kind of taken hold of the appropriations

process. But I trust at some point, we will enter a phase where people get serious about actually passing appropriation bills and we'll we'll see something different.

So out of respect for the former Chair of this Committee, I rather than repeating my frustrations through endless questions, I will ask no questions, and I will yield back. Thank you.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. McGovern. I do not have any questions. And I guess we'll go to miss Scanlon.

Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-Pa.)

Thank you. I am just really concerned about the cuts in this bill because the billions of dollars that are cut on conservation protecting wildlife for remediation of legacy pollution, ensuring clean drinking water, they're all really really important to focus in my district. Philadelphia and the surrounding counties rely heavily on the clean water and Drinking Water State Revolving funds. The Hinds Wildlife Refuge relies on funding from US Fish and Wildlife, both to protect the environment and to address regional flooding issues from overdevelopment throughout our area.

1000s of my constituents have used Ira credits to fix their homes, buy new appliances, heat pumps, help purchase new electric vehicles, and many more rely upon the Weatherization Assistance Program to pay for home improvements. So they can stay in their homes in the midst of a housing crisis and to lower their energy bills. So I have deeply serious concerns about a lot of this. Is there anything you wanted to add?

Miss Kaptur?

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

I just want to thank you for bringing up the topic and for your support, because we simply have to cut costs. And when you when you deny innovation, you deny efficiency across the country and you deny investment. In a nation that's growing. I tried to make that clear in my opening statement.

So I thank you very much for bringing, bringing that issue up. And people when when one weather rises home, for example, or buys a more efficient appliance, you save money and the energy bills in my area have been going up, as well as in other parts of the country because we had a very poor operator of our nuclear facility. And the public had to absorb their bad decisions. And so, so often it isn't the consumer that benefits or they get hurt, actually, by the agencies that Congressman Fleischmann referenced Nuclear Regulatory Commission, for example.

And private organizations that are represented by these folks sometimes allow unacceptable practices in the field. So I think that the efforts to try to spur innovation are I know the refrigerator I have today never hit doesn't have that ice anymore. I remember when we had the, you know, icebox, and all that stuff would leak on all the frozen food. I mean, they've gone ahead and they've invented new systems that save us money over the years, and I welcome that and I know the American people do so thank you for asking the question.

Thank you.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

Ma'am, you yield back. Okay, it just I just wanted to make sure before it went on. And Ms. Ledger Fernandez.

Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-N.M.)

Moving right along. Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you for coming and presenting these bills. You know, and and 2023 2300 Americans died from the heat.

That record is anticipated to be broken this year, thanks to July's heat wave, which I read killed up to 600 people. Drought driven fires are causing billions of dollars in damage and death across the West, including in New Mexico. And in the Atlantic, the hurricane season started early and hard, we can expect more flooding, more economic damage and more deaths. Climate change is real, expensive, and deadly.

Sadly, the Republican appropriations bills with a 43% decrease from 2024 for energy efficiency and renewable energy denies this reality and sets America up for more expensive damage and despair. I've been waiting Project 2025. And it strikes me that these appropriations bills are a bit of a preview of Republicans Stark vision for America. The 43% cut in the energy and water appropriations and the dramatic cuts for combating climate change and the interior bill, a big steps toward projects 2025 goals.

Some of those goals, including repealing landmark laws for renewable energy programs, Project 2025, or the eliminate doe loan programs, which have supported more than 47,000 jobs, causing a boom in American manufacturing. Perfectly following Project 2020. Fives guidance this bill drastically cut funding for these loan programs. Does it represent the member caster?

Yes. I mean, does it? I mean, are you worried about the kinds of cuts that we are seen in these appropriations for these programs that make a difference both in jobs, innovation. And in addressing the very real climate crisis we are confronting.

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

I'm very concerned about that. And that's why the cut you reference the 43% cut is is devastating to the future. You don't see the result of that today. But what happens is you're not able to modernize as quickly and bring up the new technologies that are that are out there.

And what you mentioned about the heat, people who expire because of the heat, that number has dramatically increased. And I know even in our part of the country, some of the high temperatures we've been experiencing in the Great Lakes region, our lakes did not freeze over for the first time. And ever I guess. So.

I have a friend I just talked to him. He lives in Tucson, it's 120 These are very different times. And therefore people are trying to use more air conditioning. They're trying to build homes that are more energy efficient.

And we have to bring on that change faster as we try to find other fuels and ways of moving people and heating and cooling our industrial and residential systems, commercial systems, and we're kind of we're not sprinting. We're not sprinting as a country. We're kind of, as I said, we're kind of acting like it's, you know, 1950 1960 it isn't and we have to capture the future. faster.

So a 43% cut is really, it truly cuts our ability to make progress faster. And a lot of these, these inventions are not, they don't come out of our national labs, sometimes they help. But people do it across our country. And you have to be able to find those technologies.

One of the most interesting ones, and I have no stock, but I always talk about it, because it's just so ingenious a plumber figured out, man who'd been a plumber for 40 years, figured out that we were wasting energy under the ground in all of our sewers, because the average temperature of what goes through them is 45 to 75 degrees year round. And so he figured out a way to put a circuit in a sewer, and revolutionize Vancouver, Canada, Seattle, Washington is being moved into Denver, Colorado, his wife, right up here at our water plant in Washington, DC. It's just like, oh my gosh, that's thermal energy. We didn't even we didn't even think about before.

And so we're doing so many things to revolutionize how people live. And those loan programs allow inventors and business people to bring their technology to market.

Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-N.M.)

Right. And so what it is, is the bill seem to be looking backward at existing technology at Coal fossil fuel instead of to the future. And I think that's what's exciting about what we've been proposing is let's look to the future. Not constantly backwards, right?

So you know, the other things and I know that we were gonna be joined by Representative pinguy. And she's, like, everybody's stuck on a plane somewhere, right? Is at a local level, but cuts to the interior, bro on things like the clean water I have. I have in my district, places like Dixon in Lovington, who rely on those federal programs for clean water.

And we are cutting them. We are cutting the Not we but the Republicans bills are proposing cutting things like your basic clean water and drinking water, state revolving funds. Those are really difficult. And you know, I know that we're going to also be hearing about the appropriations bills in the next panel.

And then Tara Belen, those are going to tell us like, where our priorities are, and, and the priorities don't seem to be for rural America, the bar, these are not for the communities I represent. And that hurts when I see these kinds of bills.

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

I want to thank you for bringing that up. Because the cut for our water and wastewater drinking water is nearly a 25% below this year's level. And I'm sure every member who represents you know, we represent a lot of people, the rural areas, you can't possibly meet all the need. I mean, there's so many communities that come to us for water wastewater issues.

And then in the cities, what's happening is the debt burden of environmental investment. They're billions of dollars in debt, because of environmental investments, and that hurts, their ability to pay for their streets, and to take care of the traffic lights and to do the other things that have to happen in our more built up areas. But I am just I mean, I'm just like overwhelmed with requests. I'm not the only member on the water wastewater front.

And we have some communities in districts like mine, and I'm not unusual, where we have discharges into clean river into rivers, freshwater rivers of waste material. And that shouldn't be those haven't been accommodated over the years.

Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-N.M.)

So Americans are telling Republicans are telling us where their priorities are when they're willing to cut 25% from people's abilities rural America small communities ability to get what clean water and wastewater. Thank you so much. Ranking Member and I yield back.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

Thank you. And Mr. Roy from Texas.

Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas)

Thank the gentlelady appreciate you all for being here and testifying here on Monday. Just a couple quick questions. To my colleagues here. Am I correct?

Recently, the Supreme Court blocked the WOTUS rule. Right that the the EPA and Army Corps issue Correct? That is correct. Sure.

And same thing with the coal so called Good Neighbor plan right. The court has at least on the first one was blocked second was like at least temporarily blocked? I can't remember from memory from the the opinions but that's correct. Right.

That is correct. And and what this bill would of course, take on some of that and defund some some of that that effort right in line with what the court found Correct? That is correct. And I'm And furthermore, with respect to EVs, the EPA finalized rules that would force two thirds right.

Of the new vehicles sold in the United States to be electric by 2032. That roughly correct, right? That is correct. And this legislation efforts to roll that back in terms of the use of the tax dollars for the American people, correct?

That is correct. And the rationale being that the average electronic, I'm sorry, electric vehicle costs significantly more than the internal combustion engine Correct. An average of \$17,000 more vehicle leasing. Currently, things change over market times.

But they're significantly more expensive today, right? More expensive to repair, on average, that the Inflation Reduction Act so called, that was passed 90% of the subsidies in that go to corporations making over a billion dollars, is that correct? That is correct. And so what we've got is through the Democrat enacted agenda and legislation, we've got massive subsidies to big corporations, we have a restriction on the ability of the average American worker in the average American family to be able to afford an automobile to be able to carry out their jobs and go about their life.

The average plumber and average worker out there inability and difficulty afford a vehicle. Fair. Yes, sir. And the effort here by Republicans is to put together an appropriations package, recognizing that reality and constraining them in a number of tax dollars going to perpetuate and prop up what we believe is a significant significant negative impact on the average American family being able to afford an automobile and afford energy in the United States.

Is that a fair characterization?

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

That is correct. And that's why we took that action in the bill, sir.

Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas)

And, and I just think that's really critically important. I mean, in addition, with respect to the weakening of the grid, the reduction of reliable and available energy, all in the name, I'm told by my colleagues on other side of the aisle and advancing an agenda for dealing with climate change. But in the middle of all of that, ignoring the reality that all of these changes, would have an honorable gentleman would agree with me on this a fractional fractional impact on the overall co2 production in the planet. In other words, if you abolish the internal combustion engine in the United States, you will reduce co2 emissions by one and a half to 2%.

Some fractional nominal amount is done roughly agree with that.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

That is what the science and reports have shown. So there are some people on the other side that would disagree with that conclusion. But I agree with your conclusion, sir.

Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas)

And so the reason this is important, right, from an appropriation standpoint is and I assume the gentleman again, for the record, we are approaching \$35 trillion in debt. Is that correct?

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

That is abundantly correct, and sadly growing?

Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas)

And would the gentleman agree that with all due respect to my colleagues on both sides, Alberta has been a bipartisan problem, that we have collectively failed to do our job, and we are thus \$35 trillion in debt.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Would would would agree and would further say that, in all, due respect to my great friend from Texas, appropriations has not been the problem there. It's mandatory spending, which is driving 70 to 75% of the programs. But we're all we should all be willing to deal with both mandatory and discretionary spending. But, but appropriations per se is not the problem.

But we we do need to be fiscally responsible in the way we go about our work.

Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas)

Agreed with the gentleman agreed that we have not seen a rather voracious attempt by members on either side of the aisle to put forward bills that would dramatically reduce the spending of mandatory spending.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

In many of the appropriation bills that we've put forth in the House, we've seen significant cuts across many of the 12 bills.

Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas)

Since we on the discretionary side, right. There has not been a lot of effort on either side of the aisle to address in a significant way mandatory spending just as a general observation. Again, I'm I'm being equal opportunity, criticize, you're here. And so my point, though being is that on the discretionary side 25% of gentlemen said of the overall spending level, the goal here is to constrain this spending level for interior and for energy and water, which is what we're talking about here.

Those are adhering to the FRA caps, is that correct? Absolutely. And those were the fre caps that that some of us want it to be lower, but those were agreed to on a bipartisan basis at roughly I'm gonna call it the \$1.6 trillion rough level 1.6. So for whatever it was the FRA caps, these bills would fund below those levels Correct.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

That is correct. And there are no side deals whatsoever. And our bills reflect the FRA.

Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas)

Meanwhile, our Democrat counterparts in the Senate are talking about at least publicly, I can't remember what bills have been passed yet or not about cracking those caps by some 30 or 35 billion. Is that Is that correct? That's my understanding.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

I've seen some rhetoric from our friends in the Senate in that regard. And I think that's counterproductive. But but the gentleman is correct. That's where the differences are.

Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas)

My point to bring that up is that while I concur that the primary driver of the \$35 trillion of debt has been mandatory spending. And that, you know, we've had considerable revenue coming in, regardless of taxes, the total debt, the driver of total debt has been mandatory spending, that it's correct. And the the, the reality is on the discretionary side, however, we need to constrain it. And that was what the FRA was recognizing.

And I would, I would argue that just for the American people to understand what we're trying to accomplish here, the appropriations bills, love, love them or hate them, like there are things in here I would prefer to cut, I'm offering some amendments to cut it further, I think we should cut it further. But that that the goal here would be to reduce the discretionary spending level down. Again, if it's only 25% of the driver, it's still 25% of the driver. Like if I gotta go balance my budget at my House, I gotta go deal with each component of my home, right?

And dealing with alright, what can I do over here, I can't affect my mortgage, but I can reduce electricity consumption, I can, you know, keep driving an old car, whatever it is. So here, we're doing this component, and trying to be responsible stewards, while constraining the size and scope of the discretionary budget, and do our job, according to the bipartisan cap, passed FRA caps, think that's an important piece for Buddy understand, and meanwhile, carry out the functions of these agencies, frankly, probably, significantly, more than some of us would prefer to do in terms of size and scope of government. Is that am I characterizing this all fairly?

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

I think the gentleman is characterizing correctly. And if gentleman will, I might be attorney by profession is the gentleman. I believe in the old Collateral source rule, nothing outside the written agreement should come into the agreement. And that's why that is in place in our profession in law.

So I sincerely hope we stick to the FRA levels that the gentleman has alluded to.

Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas)

Well, I appreciate that. I mean, there are things for example, the energy efficiency and renewable energy \$2 billion, that's over the current energy that I'm offering an amendment to deal with. There are other things the fossil energy and carbon management, the sequestration stuff that I think, you know, you got two three \$4 billion, and things here that I think we can still find ways to constrain and black votes on the floor on that. But I think it's important to note that we're trying to stick under FRA caps.

We're trying to address the damage being done by policies that were enacted, that are destroying the average American family's ability to afford energy, have reliable grid, have reliable power afford a vehicle that they can afford. And we're staring down the barrel in eight years of having two thirds fleet electric vehicles without the infrastructure to manage it without the ability for families to afford it. While denting at best co2 production and empowering China and empowering our adversaries. In the meantime, without I would yield back.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

Thank you. And now I'd call on the gentleman from New York, Mr. Langworthy.

Rep. Nick Langworthy (R-N.Y.)

Thank you Madam Chair, Chairman Fleischmann, our colleagues on the other side of the House have lamented about the elimination of the Department of Energy loan program funds and how this is detrimental to their clean energy investments. Would you like to address these claims? Absolutely.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Nuclear energy is clean energy. Thank the gentleman for his question. As we look forward, not only the United States, but the world's demand for electric power, electricity is going to grow exponentially. In my part of the world, the Tennessee Valley Authority does a tremendous job dealing with this but their projections are that we're going to need more power.

Having a diverse portfolio is critical to that they're actually 47% Nuclear now but we've got hydro, really all of the above to address what the gentleman is has said we do in order to fund three advanced demonstration projects, drawdown from these these bills but we do not deplete them totally. And the reality is, it funds clean energy, nuclear energy is clean, safe, abundant energy. And I will say this, some of my younger progressive friends are joining us in this, some of our more senior progressive friends have a problem getting there with with new nuclear. And I respect that I come from that generation as well.

But it's safe, it's reliable. And we are taking these funds in a way that even though the minority would like to see them to go for other forms of clean energy, we've got the designs, we've got the technology, and we've got the potential to actually lead the world again, in new nuclear. So these are very wise investments we draw down from these funds. And and get three funded, I could have chose to cut them, but I didn't want to pick winners and losers.

There's some tremendous generation three reactors out there. GE Hitachi is one that TVA is looking at the generation Ford is that friends on both sides of the aisle, whether it's x energy, or TerraPower, or Kairos, that are hailing independent, are also worthy. And we fund all three in this bill. I thank the gentleman.

Rep. Nick Langworthy (R-N.Y.)

Well, thank you, Chairman Fleischman, I agree with you, we need an all of the above energy approach is truly about cleaner, affordable and reliable forms of energy. And that includes nuclear and other cutting edge technology. We cannot be chasing fantasies that our colleagues in the left hand sister, some magic silver bullet will only drive up costs for everyday Americans. As you've pointed out today, it's clear that the Biden EPA is over regulating every sector of our economy, from farming to power generation to manufacturing.

And I'm pleased that this interior bill includes roughly two dozen riders defunding regulations and executive orders that do not strike an appropriate balance between economic growth and protecting our environment. Chairman Cole, would you like to take a minute or two to give us any examples on that?

Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.)

In terms of.

Rep. Nick Langworthy (R-N.Y.)

You know, things that are being changed that that do not strike the appropriate balance between economic growth and protecting the environment that I'm dealing with.

Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.)

But again, there's a range of things that that are regulatory in nature, that we just think aren't appropriate and aren't acceptable. So these bills address those I'm particularly proud of Mr. flashguns, Bill and energy and water. In the bill that I'm dealing with, probably the most important things are things that get rid of some of the restrictions placed, for instance, on Arctic wildlife, areas where we can drill, offshore drilling, things of that nature, where again, we've got regulatory burden that increased costs, limit production, those are taken care of, and these bills.

Rep. Nick Langworthy (R-N.Y.)

It's great to see you back here, Chairman Cole, and I see Chairman Burgess is not here. So if you want to make any appointments in the back room, just let me know. But I've recently had the opportunity to speak with a number of our small scale oil and gas operators in New York State, and they are hanging on for dear life against state and federal regulations that are collaborating to try to take them out of out of business altogether. 20 years ago, the regulatory hurdles they had to jump through were as long as a packet of paper and today, they tell me it's the size of a phonebook.

There is real intent by those on the left to use the regulatory state to make life harder for these operators, and so many others, without whom energy costs would be even higher in our economy could be an even worship. I strongly support the legislation before us and I thank you both for your leadership and ensuring that these writers were ultimately included and with that I will yield back Mr. Madam Chair.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Langworthy. And with that you are excused we thank you for being here. You guys got off easy. I think it took it easy on you, Mr. Cole.

But thank you all for being here. Well, and I like to welcome our second panel and we'll go ahead and get started. We're waiting for another. But I will go ahead and I will call on Mr. Harris.

Rep. Andy Harris (R-Md.)

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank Ranking Member McGovern and members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the fiscal year 25 agriculture, rural development Food and Drug Administration and related agencies appropriations bill. I want to thank Appropriations Committee Chairman Cole for his leadership and passing all 12 bills out of Committee.

I also want to recognize the Ranking Member of the full Committee Mr. Laurel and the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Mr. Mr. Bishop for their help in getting us to this point. I appreciate the conversations Mr. Bishop and I have had and while I know we don't agree on everything in the bill, we do agree on the importance of the agencies this bill funds. As Americans know all too well, our country continues to grapple with inflation driven by the uncontrolled spending of the Biden Harris administration. In their latest report, the Congressional Budget Office projects the cumulative deficits will total \$22.1 trillion over the next 10 years, which is 10% higher than their projections just five months ago.

We simply can't continue down this path of spending large sums of borrowed money with little accountability. This bill takes the same approach American families take every day, they have to do more with less under the Biden Harris economy. For fiscal year 2025, the agriculture bills discretionary allocation is 25.87 3,355,000,000, or 1.35%. decrease from the FY 24 enacted level.

This bill touches every American every day, as we all depend on a safe food and drug supply overseen by both the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration. This bill targets funding to critical programs by supporting rural communities, providing us producers with the tools they need to feed and clothe the world, and ensuring all Americans who need assistance through nutrition programs like WIC, snap and school meals will be served. This legislation also rains in harmful regulations that increase the cost of doing business and make it harder to live and work in rural communities. And it builds on efforts to prevent the purchase of farmland by our foreign adversaries.

I look forward to working with all of you as the bill moves forward. Again, I want to thank you for considering amendments to this bill from members on both sides of the aisle. I appreciate your time and the opportunity to testify today. I yield back.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

Thank you Mr. Harrison. I I believe Mr. Hoyer is doing double duty.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

So please, I will not try to contend with Mr. Harris on the Ag bill but I will get the comments brief, very brief comments that Mr. Bishop would make if he were on the ground. I don't mean that his feet aren't the ground but he is currently Apparently not. On behalf of Ranking Member Bishop whose flight is delayed let me quickly mention democratic concerns about the bill. And I might say Mr. Bishops concern as well.

First of all, Food for Peace is cut by over 40% its lowest level in over 20 years. That is a cost that will be much greater because of the lack of spending on Food for Peace funding for SNAP administrative costs is cut drastically preventing important work on payment accuracy, retailer integrity and trafficking. Rural Development is five 5% below the request leaving housing loans, broadband and water and waste funding at unacceptably low levels. FDA the Food and Drug Administration is frozen at the 24 level and Commodity Futures Trading Commission is 5% below 2024.

It contains a laundry list of petty partisan provisions that target LGBTQ Americans people of color Americans living with disabilities and underserved communities. As I've said before, we need to work on responsible bipartisan legislation. Instead of wasting time on bills that have no chance of becoming law say more. For that, when I've talked about the financial services general government bill, I thank the Committee.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Hoyer and oh, do you want to do your second, but we're still with Mr. Joyce as a minute out. Maybe that's nope, it isn't. But do you want to do your your second testimony now?

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

And then Mr. Joyce, are you only have the one where you can finish? I don't know how much.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

Well, we're waiting for Mr. Joyce so that he can.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

Mr. Harris wouldn't have to wait, however. Yeah. All right.

I'll do it. Think this will be a little longer. Today I want to testify not only to this bill's shortcoming and I'm offering the FS GG bill. And there are many, but to the broken product that it's produced.

Our Subcommittee has been relegated to a subcommittees generally have been relegated to the sidelines of the appropriations process. And very frankly, that's bad for the Committee. That's bad for the Congress. And that's bad for the country.

In fiscal year 2020, for the financial services general government Committee received \$26.5 billion, which was less less than its fiscal 23 A year allocation by a billion dollars. This bill for 2025 funds, the General Government Committee at \$23.6 billion \$3.7 billion below fiscal year 23. That's an 11% cut below the enacted fiscal year 24. About 13.5% below fiscal year 23 and a 20%.

Cut below the President's fiscal year 24 request, I suggest you that has much more to do with a political message than it has to do with financial responsibility and acting on behalf of the American people. You might want me to stop now. Mr. Joyce is the Chairman. Oh, no.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

Mr. Hoyer are you go ahead and finish up in Mr. Joyce.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

We have slipped substantially, in my view, disadvantage, non defense discretionary spending by not including the \$75 billion in the so called side deal. Now on the previous Chairman, reference that he's looks at the four squares of the document. However, when you're sitting in the room, and the room agrees that in addition to the substantial increase in defense spending, we will also agree to a \$75 billion additional add on for non defense discretionary spending. That has not been honored.

Now, withstanding the fact that it wasn't in the deal. It was clearly part of the discussion and the understanding. My colleagues across the aisle make these cuts in the name of fiscal responsibility. A priority I share but you can't fix our debt by making cuts to a bill that only represents three tenths of a percent of the federal budget and collects all the revenue that these committees are spending that are not borrowed.

Just plain math. This bill and its cuts will not have a meaningful impact on our debt, but it will have a meaningfully negative effect on the American people. Federal workers could face layoffs, hiring freezes or furloughs, federal agencies will have greater difficulty enforcing our financial laws. And the criminals who break those laws will have an easier time escaping justice.

This bill cuts IRS funding by \$2.2 billion below fiscal year 2024. to levels that the IRS had in 2014 1515 years ago letting tax cheats off the hook at the expense of hardworking Americans who dutifully pay their taxes voluntarily. The agency's enforcement efforts at hit particularly hard, receiving \$2 billion of that 2,000,000,002 point 2 billion cut the agency's enforcement efforts efforts are cut 37% No one ought to be surprised if you run an operation and you cut your collectibles out operation by 37% that you don't get as much money as you are doing owing from goods and services that were bought by your customers but are unpaid for. These cuts come at a tremendous cost American taxpayers IRS data finds that it's most productive.

The agency at its most productive that the agency collects for every \$1 we spend on revenue collection and A minimum of six to \$7 and Harvard economist suggest at the upper levels, you collect \$12, or there abouts for every \$1. You spent. I will tell you at the lower levels, for the most part depending upon at what level you are, but probably under 200,000, your one for one. But it will not surprise you that we look at the one for ones a lot more than we look at the wealthiest of our citizens.

Addressing the debt means giving our government the resources it needs to collect legally owed revenue. This is not a tax increase. This is not harassing taxpayers. This is saying if the law says you owe \$10 You owe \$10.

Don't pay us \$8. And if we do not have the enforcement personnel to carry that out, the incentive will be to take a position that is not consistent with the law. Their bill would also make it harder and more expensive for Americans to file their taxes by undermining the IRS is new direct file program which has been tried in many states, many states, which are represented the Appropriations Committee, and has been embraced by taxpayers as being much easier and cost free. We don't force them to pay expenses above that which they owe and their taxes.

Our government legally requires Americans to pay their taxes. So we ought to provide them with a service, an easy way to do so. These cuts are especially damaging because the IRS has been underfunded for years by both parties. But very substantially by the Republican Party who substitute their anger at the IRS as as undermining our ability to revenues that are owed IRS funding has remained flat even as the number of tax return has gone up substantially and the number of taxpayers have gone up since then she has more work and fewer people.

Though nominally saying flat IRS funding has actually gone down by 25%. When we count for inflation. The consequences of these cuts are clear. The IRS examination rate of people making \$1 million or more a year has plummeted from 9%.

On all be concerned about this, going from 9% Checking the wealthiest PAC taxpayers to point six 9%. Is it any wonder that we have a tax cap of \$688 billion. So in other words, the cuts in this bill over the years have resulted in an under collection of owed taxes of \$688 billion if we're serious about reducing the debt and minimally autofill President Biden's request to fund the IRS at 24 levels, which is 3.1 billion more than what's in the bill to collect trillions of dollars. Ideally, we secure additional funding to offset last year's rescission and the years of underfunding before this bill aids and abet scammers tax cheats and those with predatory business practices, and undermines the agencies tasked there's a lot of talk about law enforcement, a lot of talk about people following the rules and the law.

What we do in this bill is cut the enforcement of almost every agency that promotes that the Federal Trade Commission faces a 37 million or 9%, cut beneath the enact it, and 146 point 3 million or 28% cut below the request. That's not a shave. And very frankly, Mr. Chairman, the discussion here you weren't in the room was about cutting on the on the non defense side of the budget. On the discretionary side of the budget, most of that is defense.

And most of us think that's necessary. But nobody is talking about trying to rein that in. So that health, education, enforcement of taxes, enforcement of trade rules, enforcement of security rules, now that is increased. Mr. Joyce will tell you that I'm sure the FTC is working lower Americans cost we all talked about costs.

We talked about inflation, which by the way is better in America than almost anywhere else in the world. So it has nothing to do with Biden and everything to do with the international economy. My friends across the aisle talk a lot about rising costs work with us to help lower them by increasing funding for the FTC and other agencies that protect consumers and promote competition that includes respecting the Supreme Court's recent seven to two decision authored by Justice Thomas. Not recently known as a left wing Democrat that Somebody people refer to around here that upheld the constitutionality of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is independent funding structure, do not turn that into a political football.

Its sole job is to protect consumers. And you want to turn it into a political commission, that if you don't have one member, there may be lockstep and can't do anything for the consumer, as we have seen in some other agency. This bill contradicts that decision and undermines the CFPB has worked to protect consumers from the same predatory practices that led to the great recession. We watched, and it happened on our watch.

This bill undermines other agencies as well, cutting funding for the Financial Crimes Enforcement Agency, follow the money is our statement to everybody if you want to get it real, big, organized crime, the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence is cut. I didn't see that that had gone away. Other enforcement agencies as well, I won't go into these cuts alone make this bill unacceptable. It's partisan writers restricting reproductive health care undermining DC Home Rule, and weakening the gun safety laws.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Oh, come on. Here we go.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

We can gun safely. I was only confirm this legislation will never pass. This is too long a statement for a bill that will never pass. I understand that.

But I wanted to show the scope of the cuts that are going to harm our country and our people. This bill was dead from the start, of course, the Chairman of our Committee, Mr. Cole, the former Chairman of your Committee says, Well, this is a start. It's a start. It's a very bad start.

And everybody in this room knows these bills will not see the light of day, once they go off the floor if they get off the floor. Well, to try to get all done appropriation bills done by August, as Majority Leader I tried to do that eight years running. I succeeded one year. It's tough to do.

And the Senate doesn't pass bills. I don't think they pass the single appropriation bills through the floor this year. As my colleagues, that goal of passing the bills only has merit if those bills are reasonable and can actually become wall. A bill before us is not.

Mr. Chairman, that's not responsible. It's not effective. And it's a waste of our time. And it's damaging to this institution.

Instead, let's work together on a compromise worthy of the people's House than the Americans who sent us here to serve them. That was the negative the positive is the Chairman of this Committee is a person who wants to work together, wants to work constructively, and wants to work effectively. On behalf of the American people. I am honored to serve with Mr. Joyce and I will yield to him.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Mr. Joyce, you're recognized.

Rep. Dave Joyce (R-Ohio)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you Chairman Burgess, Ranking Member McGovern and the rest of the members of this Committee Nick back in the corner. I also want to thank for allowing us to be here on this 2025 financial services and general governance appropriations bill. I want to thank the Appropriations Committee Chairman Tom Cole for his leadership in moving this bill and the fiscal year 2025 appropriations process forward.

I'd also like to thank the Ranking Member of the full Committee, Mr. Laurel and the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, my distinguished colleague, Mr. Hoyer for their leadership and support. I appreciate the input members on both sides of the

aisle have provided for this bill with the 1000s of requests and hundreds of amendments. We've worked to incorporate language addressing a broad range of engineering issues from prohibiting implementation of a central digital bank currency to permitting members of Congress access to US postal facilities. Fiscal Year 2025 financial services and general government appropriation bills provide sensible cuts to federal financial and consumer protection agencies.

And this bill prioritizes when funding levels to return these agencies to their core missions, and root out the unnecessary spending. Further, the bill constrains that bureaucratic overreach and provides critical oversight over the executive branch and District of Columbia. Specifically, it protects small businesses from harmful regulations, prohibits funding for climate and ESG rule makings and related executive orders and prohibits the implementation of the DC Council's anti police law. Again, I want to thank you Chairman and purchasing the rest of the rules Committee for considering the amendments to this bill from members on board.

All sides out. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify today. I yield back.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

And thank all of our witnesses for further testimony. Let me just ask you, Miss Joyce, this bill that you just presented sound to be in stark contrast to what Mr. Horner was discussing when I gave him the vote in your in your Subcommittee, what was the vote in your Subcommittee?

Rep. Dave Joyce (R-Ohio)

The exact numbers? I'm not sure. But it was by hobbyzone jority. That passed out of Committee submits to the Ag Committee.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Was there are no Democrats who voted for this. I guess that was going to be my question. Still, I think we all recognize well, when Ranking Member Kaptur was was here, she talked about the the state of the economy and in 1946, were at the same debt to GDP ratio, that they handed it 46 accepted in 1946. We just beat the Nazis in Imperial Japan, developed the atomic age.

And now, we may be on the threshold of something that's even worse. And yet we're going into it with a debt to GDP ratio that is, in fact unsustainable. So none of this is easy. And I wouldn't, I wouldn't, for a moment, pretend that it is.

But I want to, I want to thank you for your work on this. It's extremely important. Every dollar we spend as \$1 that's borrowed. And we know the carrying costs on that now we're probably 50 to 60 cents on every dollar that we've that we've had to borrow from China to to run our agencies.

So these are important bills that you've done. I know the the outlook sometimes can be difficult when you look at the floor activity is going to be but at the same time, we couldn't get where we are today if you hadn't done the work that you did, and the Ag Subcommittee to so really appreciate the work you did at the appropriations level. I have no other questions. I'll yield to Mr. McGovern.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's great to see everybody. Mr. Joyce and Mr. Harris. And while I thank you for being here, I have to ask Are your bills gonna be up on the House floor this week?

Rep. Dave Joyce (R-Ohio)

My understanding is this week will be interior and energy and water only next week, next week. Ours planned to go up but this week with the Prime Minister of Israel coming in and shortner week a little bit.

Rep. Andy Harris (R-Md.)

A bad decision is much above my paygrade.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

And that's thank you for the honest answer. You know, and because I'm trying to understand why we're here on these bills right now. And it's fascinating to me, it's like Republican superpower is wasting time, because we knew from reporting, including two tweets I have here. One from Victoria night at Axios.

And one from Caitlin Emma at politico, that Republicans dropped these bills from the schedule, and I have a political article here from today entitled House GOP forced to temporarily scrap to funding bills with abortion writers. But even last night, and an email I have here from a leader Scalise, where he tells us and I quote, what to watch for on the House floor this week. He mentioned the interior bill, and he mentioned the energy water bill. But there is zero mention of ag or financial services, because you pulled them and passing appropriation bills is just a horse point that is kind of a basic function of this body.

And again, if your leadership wants to pull these bills, then I don't understand why we're here. I don't know whether anybody could answer that question. Because, you know, let me just suggest that we use the rules committees, limited time on bills that are ready for primetime bills that are actually that actually have a chance of becoming law or I should rephrase that, or at the very least of passing in the House, because we have hundreds of amendments submitted here. Hundreds of amendments that are vetted by staff, and all for nothing.

It appears Republicans talk about waste, fraud and abuse. But this is the most wasteful use of time and man and women hours I've seen between Legislative Counsel CBO the parliamentarians office, hundreds of hours are wasted by pulling these bills. I mean, there's a gazillion amendments that have been written and vetted, and people got to testify. And I would I would just urge my colleagues to think about that as they as they pull these these stunts.

I mean, I appreciate you all want your bills to pass, but it appears that a decision has already been made that they're not going to pass And then we're kind of going through this exercise. And we may never see these bills on the House floor. And I don't understand the rationale behind all of that. But there's got to be a better way to proceed.

Again, I think going back to Mr. Hayes testimony, maybe if we brought bills to the Rules Committee, appropriation bills, that were a little bit more balanced, and a little less ideological. And with a few less riders, maybe we would have the basis to actually move a bill to the floor that might not only pass with Republican votes, but might even win some Democratic votes. Just a horror.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

Mr. McGovern, let me point out, and I think you my two colleagues will agree on this. For the most part, the debate in the appropriation Committee is not related to funding. I don't mean exclusively, it's not because there are clearly items of how much are we going to spend on this with that item.

But most of the debate we have are about ideological items, not about money.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Yeah, I mean, and again, the question is why did the press know more about the fate of these bills than the chairs of the committees? I don't quite get that. But in any event, I hope that I don't have I don't there's no sense of asking any questions. And again, I just, you know, if these bills don't go anywhere, I feel bad for all the people that put the time into writing these amendments, vetting these amendments, scoring these amendments.

It that's a lot of work, and a lot of time, and I think if this these aren't going anywhere, we owe these people an apology that I yield back.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Gentleman yields back Chair. Thanks, gentlemen, for his thoughtful comments. The Chair recognizes the gentelady from Minnesota for any questions she has.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I guess I I really appreciate the work of the committee's because, as was mentioned, you know, we're facing huge debt. And we need to address that. And it is one of the things that I hear from constituents all the time is what are you doing about this?

So I appreciate the work. And and I'm a bit confused by the ranking members. The ranking members comments about we're wasting time because I see moving appropriations bills through the process is a good thing as a positive thing as we are we being very transparent. They're going through Committee, they're here included, and I will yield.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Moving here in Rules Committee, all these amendments have been offered. And we're reading in the press that they're not going to come to the floor. So I mean, it seems like this is a very flawed process. If it is not getting to the House floor.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

And Ranking Member, maybe they will eventually get to the floor, maybe just not this week, because as Mr. Joyce mentioned, we've got, you know, Wednesday we have is Wednesday we have a Prime Minister Netanyahu, that takes a lot of time and takes away a lot of time. If we do a lot of amendments on the floor. There's going to be it takes more time. But I think the real problem is here is you think we're wasting time do what has the Senate Democrats don't well, we could get these but we could get these two conference Committee.

We're passing things off the floor. And we could legitimately get these in if if the Senate Democrats would do anything?

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Well, we only have a 60 vote threshold in the Senate, as the gentlelady knows, but I also pointed out we've had appropriation bills that you can pass with Republican votes. So you know, that's, I think these bills are being fooled because you cannot pass them and Ranking Member very few of those.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

But we have passed several lately. I don't know the number off the top of my head, but there are there are there are appropriations bills that have been passed off this floor that could potentially be in conference Committee being dealt with by the Senate Democrats. We're doing our work. We are passing appropriation bills, the Senate Democrats have chosen to just shut it down.

You will not do a darn thing doing work means we are we are doing we are we are passing appropriation bill. Isn't that what we're here for? Am I confused? That we are here for to put send these through Committee?

Yes, sir. We passed a third of the bills. A third of them that's that's significant. That's not That's not zero.

And they're not gonna go anywhere. Because the Senate Democrats have not have chosen not to engage. They're not doing anything over there. We're sending bills.

We are doing our work. We are doing our work and sending appropriations bills, are we not? I mean, we're sitting here passing appropriations.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

We're not doing it in a collegial way that will predict and all the way way the Democrats want us to do.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

So. You know what with that, I think we recognize I we recognize that there's the House Republicans are passing appropriations bills that address the issues our country are facing, and that is a huge, huge national debt. The Senate Democrats have chosen not to take those not to send them to conference Committee. They're not acting very collegiate.

Lee Jill because they're not willing to even talk to us about say Neos conference Committee. And with that I yield back. Mr. Chair.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

I yield back. Gentlelady yields back.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Yeah, I just have I have to say, say for the record, I mean, I mean, first of all, you're not passing all your appropriation bills, number one, number number number two, number two, his his really radical idea. Maybe if you negotiated with Democrats, given your slim majority, and didn't load up these appropriations bills like a mega Christmas tree, maybe there is a chance that we can pass them in a bipartisan way, and the Senate would take them, but the Ranking Member will have to worry about the 60 vote threshold that I'm happy to yield to the gentelady because I would never cut her off, like, just cut me off.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

Well, I know I had yielded to you several times before. Ranking Member don't I did I have yielded to you several times. But I just wanted to point out that there was a negotiated tax bill that came out of Ways and Means it was a great tax bill, it was negotiated. It even had bipartisan support coming out of Ways and Means we passed it in the Senate Democrats would not would not honor that negotiated deal.

And so that's so that tax bill that people were talking about that was absolutely helpful for the economy for businesses, they chose not to take it up. So that's what happens when we pre negotiate is the Senate Democrats decide not to do anything about it. And I thank the member for yield IQ.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

And I would just remind everybody, I think we're talking about appropriation bills right now. And which is, you know, the funding of our of our government, which are incredibly important matters, which this whole process is all screwed up.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

But I think Ranking Member will yield, I'd like to recognize, I'd like to recognize the gentelady from Pennsylvania for any questions she might have.

Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-Pa.)

Well, thank you so much. Um, yeah, I am, as with the prior bills, really concerned about the cuts here. I mean, we've heard that the House Republicans are passing bills to address the issues facing the country. But these bills cut vital food assistance programs like SNAP and WIC to provide millions of families with food in a time period when we're seeing increasing food insecurity, otherwise known as hunger.

Across the country, they're cutting funding for the IRS to make it easier for the wealthy to avoid paying their taxes. They're slashing budgets for the FTC and the CFPB. The two main agencies that police scammers, fraudsters, people who run fake for profit universities that try to cheat people out of their money. And there's cuts to everything here cuts to rural housing, when we're in the midst of a housing crisis cuts to economic development cuts to the agency that polices money laundering.

And while Republicans are constantly feeding this false narrative of election denial, this cuts Funding for Election security grants, you would think if it were really an issue, then they would want to fund election security grants. So there's hypocrisy here kind of across the board. But there's one particular thing in here which has been a long standing interest of mine. They're going to big bat for big tobacco in this bill.

Right now, the FDA is in the process of banning flavored cigars, which is one of the main products used by big tobacco to get kids hooked on nicotine. They target bodegas in my district in Philadelphia in Chester selling these little cigarillos that are flavored with strawberry and fruit punch, to market to kids to get the next generation hooked on nicotine. And these products aren't for adult smokers. I think members of this Rules Committee would be offended by the idea of a fruit punch cigar, I think the former tariffs certainly would be.

So banning these products is a no brainer. It's like banning ads featuring Joe Camel. They are simply designed to attract kids and they should not have any place in our economy. But Republicans are trying to block the FDA from banning these products as a handout to the tobacco industry.

So

I don't think these bills have the right vision for the country. They the vision in these bills is an economy that benefits the wealthy and big business rather than consumers and workers and families. So I can't support them. Did you want to add anything?

Mr. Hoyer from your testimony?

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

No, I think you're right. My point has been and I pressed him the government's been has been I've served on the Appropriations Committee for a very long time since 1983. I've served together when Democrats and Republicans work together in subcommittees to form a bill that had a reasonable chance and many times many, many times got a bipartisan vote. Not only Committee but on the floor, that doesn't happen anymore.

And very frankly, we don't particularly, we don't particularly we don't participate in notions about what the markup is going to be. I don't mean that we can't make suggestions, but we don't participate in that. And I think that has undermined our institution. And that is, frankly, why we have four people at the end of the road who decide what the appropriation process is going, going to be about.

As opposed to the Appropriations Committee meeting and conference. We used to have conferences, they're no conferences anymore. So that both sides mean, after all, this is a Congress divided at one point in time by one vote. Now, I think it's up to three, maybe four, you would think that that would compel us to sit down and talk together as a matter of fact, not a single major fiscal bill, other than tax bill, which was bipartisan.

Why? Because Mr. Neal and Mr. Smith worked together on it. Not a single fiscal bill has passed without, in many cases, our majority and their minority, because we thought, in the best interest of the country and of the American people.

Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-Pa.)

I think that's some of the frustration we saw spilling over earlier that in order to do the work of passing bills that can be signed into law. We need it to be bicameral and bipartisan for folks who come together in the middle where it's my perception, most Americans live and work together rather than negotiating with the most extreme elements.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

Let me just add a comment. Because I felt this way as Majority Leader, well, the Senate's not doing a, the only body that we can answer for is this body and do what we can do. The Senate is a frustrating body for us. Why?

Because we can pass things by one vote. The Senate needs 60 votes, and it's very difficult to get there. And they have a partisan difference of one vote. So it's not surprising that they have trouble coming to agreement.

Said unfortunate for the country, but not surprising.

Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-Pa.)

And that's something as someone who has not spent many years here in DC, it's very frustrating to see crazy, wildly partisan legislation rammed through the House with the excuse that oh, you know, well, the Senate won't actually do anything that crazy. Who knows? Sometimes they do. But thank you.

I yield back.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Sure. Thanks. The gentlelady general yields back, the gentleman from New York is recognized for questions.

Rep. Nick Langworthy (R-N.Y.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Chairman Joyce, I appreciate the reforms that the legislation before us today, HR 8773 includes as it relates to pushing back on the Biden regulatory agenda, particularly the work that this legislation does a further put the brakes in the Biden administration and Democrat efforts to fund the IRS at historic levels and provide the agency with a level

of weaponization that has never been seen before. Chairman Joyce, can you elaborate once more here today on what this legislation does specifically to rein in the IRS, particularly as it relates to protecting Americans making less than \$200,000 a year?

Rep. Dave Joyce (R-Ohio)

Thank you very much. Mr. Langworthy. And I certainly appreciate the question. I want to make sure I get my face correct.

So we know that the IRS has hired and plans to hire 1000s of agents the remaining of the fiscal year and into fiscal year 2025. And while the IRS emphasized will not increase audit rates for small businesses and taxpayers making under 400,000. Its own inspector general report, the IRS has now provided specifics and how we'll ensure that commitment. According the wall street journal publication, the most recent data suggests the IRS is still focused on the middle class.

As of last summer 63%. A new audits target taxpayers with an income of less than \$200,000 throughout the fiscal year 2025 House bill that made sure that the taxpayer services account is not has been not been cut. So taxpayers will have their questions answered in a timely manner. I think it's important to have an agency that's actually user friendly, and explained to people how to do their taxes in a way instead of going after them, because they won't answer their questions on the front end go after them in the backend.

So I think it's important that we continue to do those things and as well, the net National Taxpayer Advocate Volunteer Income Tax Administration, and tax counseling for the elderly and low income tax clinics receive the highest allocations in their history of their programs, to make sure that people on the ground have the ability to do this and make sure they're in compliance with the regulations. Additionally, the bill brings back the IRS systems modernization account to help the organization modernize its legacy systems, improve tax filing operations to combat tax Though his actions contribute to the success of the areas, while keeping an eye on the potential wasteful spending that they have, thank you.

Rep. Nick Langworthy (R-N.Y.)

I strongly support these provisions. They are the next step and House Republican efforts since the beginning of this Congress to prevent the administration from instituting as long sought expansion to the IRS. Contrary to what my colleagues on the other side of the Dyess would claim, this weaponization of the IRS is not primarily impacting the rich. But instead it's nickel and diming.

Everyday Americans into pivot here, Chairman Harris, it's been said by our colleagues across the aisle that this legislation ultimately harms our farmers. But I'd like to turn for a moment to the Biden administration's efforts to implement new energy and environmental standards and regulations through USDA. Can you speak to these green policy agenda items pursued by the Biden administration and what HR 9027 Does to put the brakes on them?

Rep. Andy Harris (R-Md.)

Certainly one thing I'd like to address if I'm if I might before that is the misconception that somehow we cut nutrition funding and this bill only in Washington, could a when you don't increase as much as the president wants in the Biden, Harris administration, then somehow you're cutting spending, for example, in SNAP, they're fully funded. It's actually mandatory funnies \$400 million more than last year. I don't know only Washington could \$400 million more than last year but be somehow interpreted as to cut it school lunch program, the TIF app programs, fully funded, fully funded, no cuts fully funded. Now, WIC is the most interesting, because the WIC is increased by \$205 million, accounting for the Biden, Harris inflation and food I get it.

But it's one foot but it is 1.2 billion above FY 22 and 23 levels and 205 million above last year's levels. Now, how is that a cut? I don't get it. But I get the talking point.

It's just plain incorrect. And it's not fair to the American people, because the American people should understand that the Republican budget funds fully funds these programs now not at the Biden, Harris administration, inflationary, excessive levels, but they fully fund them. Let me talk a little bit about some of these directly to answer your question. So for instance, there are and we know that in rural areas, how difficult it is to find housing, we have a real housing shortage in rural areas.

Unfortunately, the USDA does provide help in obtaining housing, but the Biden Harris administration put on energy conservation requirements on new housing built that might increase the cost of the housing as much as \$10,000 a unit, I've got to tell you, in my area, \$10,000 in my district per unit is a lot of money. Now, maybe in some areas, it isn't. Maybe in Massachusetts, it's not. I don't know, maybe in Pennsylvania, it's not maybe New Mexico, it's not.

But in my area, that's a significant increase. And when you increase the regulatory costs of building homes at a time when we are in a rural housing shortage, the logical result would be a greater rural housing shortage. We shouldn't put up with that. The fact of the matter is the most important thing is to deliver housing and our bill, for instance, strikes those those those energy conservation requirements that add cost to the housing, you know, there's no money saved, if you're not building the House, there's no energy you're gonna conserve in that House is more important to House our my constituents and relays and all your constituents who live in rural areas, then then costly, burdensome regulations.

Rep. Nick Langworthy (R-N.Y.)

Well, thank you very much. I appreciate you taking a moment to go into greater detail here because my colleagues on the other side of the day seem to overlook the impact that using programs under USDA to further far left agenda items, forcing them on farmers and ranchers in the process are jeopardizing our food security. And I really appreciate you delving into rural housing. I mean, it's usually the case in the Biden Harris era that, you know, rural and rust belt America is left behind.

And this is a step in the right direction. I mean, every new regulatory cost is making it more difficult for the American farmer and the American rancher to survive in a world that is more challenging than ever before in American agriculture. I appreciate the work you've done in this legislation to put the brakes on what this administration and the radical left are trying to force on to our American rural interest of USDA and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Chair, Thanks, gentlemen. gentleman yields back the gentlelady from New Mexico is recognized for questions.

Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-N.M.)

Thank you, and thank you for joining us today for this lively debate. And while there was much debate around, you know, is appropriations working like it is and what the heck are we doing here tonight of these bills aren't going to be passed, but they what strikes me is we're here and the bills tell us Republicans priorities are right. And I think that's worth having a discussion. So last year, Republicans presented us with an agricultural appropriations bill that cut funding to 2007 levels.

Let me tell this so anybody's released any Republicans wanted to cut agricultural appropriations to 2007 levels last year, and in their proposals with regards to the default on America Act, when they asked the budget Chairman, how I could explain to my world communities, these cuts, he said, I quote, you should tell them, we have to prioritize, close quote. So that's why I'm taking this thing because it's an issue of what do we prioritize? And these appropriations bills, I think, tell us, again, that Republicans do not prioritize rural America. And that's my district.

You know, that's why I've spoken with, you know, Representative Joyce, about rural areas. And, you know, we've shared many good story. So the bill actually is also concerning, because I think it gets us a few steps closer to their project 2025 goals that hurt the most vulnerable people in our communities. And total, the cuts in this bill would amount to a 3.6% decrease from current funding.

That's \$958 million, almost a billion dollars of cuts, a billion dollars of cuts. So what I see is that the Republican vision for America is filled with hungry mothers and babies at a time when we need to address funding, they cut lending to rural areas for housing, energy savings, and water projects. Now, ultimately, these are going to cost people money, right. And meanwhile, I look at the bill that Representative horror, you're here to talk about the Financial Services Bill tells me who we publicans prioritize big banks, millionaire tax cheats in Wall Street.

It impacts small businesses ability to thrive, consumer safety, fairness in our tax system. And importantly, because I'm looking out at Representative Sarbanes over there, and I know he's here to talk about the importance of election, integrity, election integrity, the foundation of our democracy, and they want to underfunded. So Ranking Member Hall, you're I've heard you, you know, I came in new when you sat there and he took us down, you said, budgets reflect your values. Tell me when you look at these two bills and what we've been talking about tonight with the other bills.

What do you see as the values that are being presented here? Are they prioritizing working families, rural America? Are they valuing the rich and powerful instead of the average middle class and working families? What do you see?

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

I don't think there's any doubt when they're dealing with both regulatory processes. And by the way, I think all of us think that regulatory process needs to be streamlined. But having said that, we don't want to throw out the baby with the bathwater, and the baby is protecting the American people. That's what regulations are for.

They're the referee on the field. So somebody doesn't break the rules, and hurt people. When it comes to the fiscal situation. My observation is the Republican are loathe to cut priorities of theirs.

But they are very quick to think that we're spending too much money on the health of American people, too much money in the education of our children, too much money, protecting the environment for our children and our grandchildren and great grandchildren. They are in denial on climate change. Mr. Roy was here. I'm just gonna call him Mr. Chip.

Mr. Roy was here. And he spoke about the necessity to save money and that this was a we were wasting money on things that people couldn't afford to change the energy posture that we have. In point of fact, what we are seeing is the result of climate change is costing us billions of dollars in fires, floods and storms. Other things as well, but and it's going to talk about agriculture.

Climate change is going to devastate the agriculture of the world and is doing so at this point in time. too hot, not enough rain, too much rain. And so you asked me I frankly think I want to I want to say this. I think the overwhelming majority of Republicans that I deal with want to make sure that our country runs as correctly and as well as he can.

I don't think they have bad motivation. But I think there's some, frankly, who pretend they're doing things that they're not doing. Like, like getting a hand on our fiscal crisis. Mr. Boehner had a wonderful bill that he reached with Mr. Obama.

None of us liked it. But it would have made a very substantial cut in the budget. Now, the problem it had was it cuts spending some spending we light and the other problem it had it raise revenues. What an awful thing.

The problem we have, in my view, is a pay for a problem. We want to buy stuff on both sides of the aisle. Both sides of the aisle, let me tell you, the big spenders are in Congress, the people who support the national defense and support economic and education and health care policy. It's the people who'd only support one of those that have a better fiscal posture.

But if you support both, which I think we need to have, you get a bad record. But we are never going to get to where we need to be in terms of appropriate expenditures. And Marcy Kaptur said it well, there's never enough money. There's always an object you can spend money on.

But there are some priorities, like our children, like our seniors, like our need to educate, like, we need to keep people healthy. As I say, Bill natural, who is the Chairman of the labor health Committee used to say, as long as you take care of the health of your people, and the education of your children, you're continue to live in the strongest and best nation on Earth. And that's what I think we as appropriators, as members of Congress, as people who have been given responsibility ought to pursue. And I think these budgets do not reflect that there's appropriation bills do not reflect that.

Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-N.M.)

Thank you very much. And what I often do when people talk about the dead is introduce different reports that point out that it's there was both revenue and spending. And the Bush tax cuts, the Trump tax cuts have contributed to that debt. And so we need to look at those as well.

Were you yield? Sure rally.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

I want to tell my Republican friends, the largest single increase in the national debt, as a percentage of the debt was under Ronald Reagan. No Bill was ever signed, was passed over his veto. The only appropriation bill or spending bill that he vetoed, that was overridden was a bill in which he said you're not spending enough 180 per 680 6% increase in the national debt signed by Ronald Reagan.

Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-N.M.)

Thank you very much for that history. And with that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Sure, thanks. Gentlelady Gentlelady yields back, seeing no other members wishing to ask questions. We'll thank this panel for their forbearance in this panel is excused. Without objection, the written testimony of the following members will be included in our record, as hockberger Mr. Davidson, Mr. gozar Mr. Ogle Realty.

Mr. Flood. Last. Oh, Jamie.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)

I guess yes, this Dr. Burgess. Dr. was good to be with you.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Mr. Flood, Mr. Moylan, Mr. Grothman. And Mr. Baird. Without objection, all of those testimonies are inserted into the record.

I would now like to invite Dr. McCormick, Mr. Rose, Mr. Flood, Mr. Sarbanes, Mr. Rosendale and Mr. Stauber to the witness table.

Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.)

So intimate in here that one word over here. What are we? Sorry.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Very well. So, based on the order of appearance, we'll begin with Dr. McCormick.

Rep. Rich McCormick (R-Ga.)

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Members of the Rules Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify on my amendments to the slew of appropriations bills The Committee is considering starting off with the financial services and General Government Appropriations Bill. My amendment number 54 will prohibit the use of funds by Securities and Exchange Commission to require investment advisors and companies to provide additional information regarding to their environmental, social and governance investing practices, also known as ESG. As we've seen, far too often in recent years, large corporations and investment firms have started to participate in social credit system, where company stock value is based not on their earnings reports or technological innovation, but on their contributions to left leaning nonprofits and their promotion of a radical climate agenda.

This is wrong is an attempt to socially engineer society through our economic institutions. According to a Deloitte 2024 survey of business executives 57% of the surveyed organizations are factoring in ESG concepts when considering how to merge or acquisition and how it will affect the company's ESG rating. Now that 42% said they do consider it, but by varying means finally over only 1% down from 6% Two years ago, say they currently don't consider ESG metrics whatsoever. This is dangerous.

The message of ESG rating is weak. We go woke, we go broke. This type of social credit score is normal to see in China, but should not be used here. It is unAmerican and wrong.

Moving through my amendment number 191, which would bring attention to the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General. This oversight body diligently investigates cases of internal mail theft and plays a pivotal role in ensuring the US Postal Service operates with its highest standards of accountability. Across the country, we have witnessed an alarming delay in mail delivery, my home state of Georgia has been ranked last in the nation on time delivery with only 63.7% of mail being delivered on time. Indeed, I've seen this affect my own household as well.

These unacceptable delays have left my constituents waiting for checks, bills, wedding invitations, even medications only to have them delivered weeks later, if at all. These delays compounded by fear of milk depth erode public competence and the Postal Service and create hesitancy amongst Americans to use the US Postal Service. My amendment would raise awareness of the hard work, the US Postal Service Officer inspector general does to tirelessly investigate and prosecute those who are

seeking to exploit our mail system, it is crucial that Americans have confidence that their mail will securely and properly be delivered. With this information in mind that my next amendment amendment number 201, would increase funding to the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General by 5 million.

This investment into the OIG will better equip them to exercise oversight over new projects, such as delivering for American plan and investigate mail theft within the Postal Service. The OIG has a proven track record of investigating crimes solving internal mail theft cases and bringing culprits to justice. From 2023 of October to March 2024. Alone, the OIG has made 304 arrests, completed 1520 investigations and returned over \$14 million to the United States Postal Service.

I urge the Committee to make these amendments in order to ensure the Office of Inspector General is equipped to exercise oversight and combat internal mail debt and finally restore confidence in the United States Postal Service. Now moving on to the interior EPA appropriations bill number, amendment number 69. My amendment will reduce funding for the Environmental Protection Agency's overall funding account and reallocate a portion of these funds to increase oversight, transparency and accountability. My amendment will reallocate 5 million to the EPA Office of Inspector General for increased oversight of the EPA the Bayes rule to is to protect human health and environment through research and development.

Yet, the EPA is often more focused on bureaucratic red tape than on serving the American people and businesses. Stringent EPA regulations burden businesses with compliance costs, leading to job losses, higher consumer prices and reduced economic competitiveness, particularly in industries such as manufacturing, energy and agriculture. The EPA Office of Inspector General has done incredible work with the funding they receive. In recent semiannual report to Congress they identified \$120.1 million in total monetary benefits and provided the EPA with 55 recommendations for improvement. For the energy and water appropriations bill amendment number 48.

This amendment prevents the Army Corps of Engineers from closing Parks and Campgrounds around Lake Lanier. My men will ensure these camp runs are open for the my constituents and the people from all over the country to enjoy the outdoors in Georgia's sixth district, like Lanier is the most visited Lake of the 464 federally operated lakes in the United States, with well over 10 million visitors from all over the country annually. The Army Corps of Engineers responsible for Lake Lanier campgrounds and parks surrounding them. Over the past summer, the Corps of Engineers suggested they may close some of the campgrounds around the lake citing lack of appropriations and need for maintenance.

Congress provided 58 point 2 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers for the fiscal year 24. In addition to the recreational fees they collected that amounted to another 11 point 1 billion more than fiscal year 23. Frankly, the court needs to provide more funding to Lake Lanier for the busy summer months. The families of Georgia's sixth district as well as all those who visit the Lake Lanier should not have to bear the consequences of mismanaged funds.

The Army Corps must better focus the needs of each community where it operates, the more local control, the better. Finally, for the agricultural rural development, Food and Drug Administration appropriations bill, amendment number 119, increases and decreases funding for the center of Drug Evaluation and Research Center account by 5 million to highlight the importance of the Center for Advancement of manufacturing pharmaceuticals, and its role within the FDA. The goal of the Center for Advancement of manufacturing Pharmaceuticals is to drive American manufacturing innovation, and most importantly, ensure that the US patient, patients and consumers have a reliable supply of quality medicines. A robust chain of command supply chain for American drug manufacturing is critical to our national security and the economic independence.

By strengthening domestic product production capabilities. We reduce reliance on foreign sources and ensure that our citizens have uninterrupted access to essential medicines, even during global crisis, which we've seen recently. Additionally, prioritizing the bolstering of our manufacturing section. Correct, creates jobs and stimulates economic growth, reinforcing the backbone of American industry.

In short, a resilient supply chain is not just a matter of health, but safeguards our national nation's sovereignty and prosperity. In closing, I thank you for your time as the rules Committee to make an order McCormick amendments number 54. Number 191. Number one, two, a one.

Number 69. Number 48. And number 119. Thank you.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Chair. Thanks, gentlemen. John from Tennessee Mr. Rose is recognized.

Rep. John Rose (R-Tenn.)

Thank you, Chairman Burgess and Ranking Member McGovern and members of the rules Committee for the opportunity to testify today. I'm here to offer a common sense and vital amendment to the fiscal year 2025 agriculture, rural development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Act. My amendment, which is amendment number 14 would protect a more than century old industry and a nearly century old tradition, the Tennessee walking horse industry. In April 2024, the Biden administration finalized a rule not supported by science that will cripple Tennessee walking horse show operations and inadvertently put horses at greater risk of harm.

The rule overhauls the inspection system of Tennessee walking horse shows by removing the US Department of Agriculture trained industry experts from the inspection process and granting federal employee inspectors sole authority to inspect horses. Additionally, the rule undermines the integrity of soaring inspections and leaves the system open to unjustified punitive outcomes. Specifically, current evidence shows that there are at least two federal veterinary medical officers are vimos that have targeted the Tennessee walking horse industry with extraordinarily high disqualifications suggesting a bias in the USDA administered inspections. Furthermore, the language provided in the rule is a slippery slope of vague inconsistencies.

In January 2021, the National Academy of Sciences engineering and medicine published a report requested by many groups including USDA is Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The report found the current soaring rule in place by USDA before the 2024 rulemaking was unenforceable and recommended a revision to the language. Unfortunately, the new rule builds on the failings of the previous rule fails to provide science based standards for inspections and fails to provide exhibitors with any pre deprivation due process. It's crucial to understand that the Tennessee walking horse industry already adheres to rigorous standards and it shows and events are the most regulated equestrian events anywhere in the nation.

Bad actors and violations remain extremely low as the industry maintained a 98% compliance rate in 2023. Alone. Breeders exhibitors and industry leaders unequivocally support the guidelines provided by the horse Protection Act, and aggressively strive to eradicate any practice of soaring. However, this Biden administration rule will target those in compliance while continuing to fail at identifying the already low number of bad actors.

My amendment would restrict the use of funds to finance or implement the administration's finalized rule and protect a valuable industry in Tennessee. I respectfully ask that you make my amendment in order and I yield back.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Chair thanks a gentleman. gentlelady from Michigan Mr. Levy is recognized for amendments.

Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to address the rules Committee regarding my amendments to the Interior Appropriations budget. It's co sponsored by Representative Debbie Dingell, as well as Representative blood blunt Rochester. And many of the get the lead out caucus members.

Mr. Chair 30, members of Congress had signed a letter urging Committee to appropriate about 1.5 billion through the drinking and Water State Revolving Fund to fund lead service line replacement. lead contaminated lines are all over our district districts across the country. I think right now we're looking at 9.2 million lines contaminated with lead that need to be replaced. So I'm very disappointed that the interior preparation bill does not even come close to meeting this funding level, which is the bare minimum needed to keep us on track to meet our goals of totally replacing all service lines in the next decade.

Mr. Chair according to a nonpartisan agency, we're looking at between 45 billion to \$60 billion that is needed, again to remove all pipes in the country. Our local communities don't have the resources, many of them are very small. Just like many of our residents live check by check many of these communities are living check by check in their capacity to address this urgent public health risk without more aggressive funding approach is growing as a crisis for them, the more time we waste. underfunding states lead pipe removal, the more people especially children, you know, you hear people say that children can't learn if they're hungry.

Children can't thrive and can't grow if they're being poisoned by lead, and some of the other contaminants that are now finding in water and their lifelong consequences, the stays in their body in their system for years. Again, this impacts every single district in our nation, lead poisoning doesn't know care about how you vote, or who represents you in Washington, DC, and again, over 9.2 million waterline what pipes that we know that are contaminated. And Mr. Chair, to be all, Frank, I

mean, Congress always seems to find I mean, what nearly a trillion dollars to spend on war. But we won't appropriate a tiny fraction of that amount to protect our own constituents here at home from being poisoned.

And water is life. Water is part of everything of our daily lives. We wash our clothes, we cook with them, we bathe our children with them, we make our formula with them. Water is important.

In a critical again, issue for our community. It's a big crisis in our nation. So I urge the Committee to please work with me and get the lead out caucus to increase appropriations support, led service line removal and all of our districts and urge the EPA to maximize the funding available to states for this urgent work. And with that, I yield.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Gentlelady yields back Chair. Thanks the gentlelady the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Sarbanes is recognized for speak on his amendments.

Rep. John Sarbanes (D-Md.)

Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Appreciate it. for allowing me to testify on amendment number 87. To the energy and water appropriations bill.

This amendment was introduced by my colleague, Congressman Bill Arachis. The amendment would provide funding to the Department of Energy's Office of International Affairs to establish the eastern Mediterranean Energy Center, a research center for energy innovation and collaboration with our eastern Mediterranean allies, Greece, Cyprus, and Israel. It builds off the success of the US Israel energy center And in that way, the eastern Mediterranean energy center was authorized by the bipartisan Eastern Mediterranean security and energy Partnership Act of 2019, which was enacted in appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2020. In do E's own words, the center will strengthen the region's energy security, bring economic growth for countries across the region, deepen geopolitical ties among participating governments and open commercial opportunities for US companies.

Moreover, this energy center would be well positioned to develop innovative energy solutions, and address regional energy security needs while reducing reliance on Russian energy sources. In accordance with our economic and national security interests. Congress reaffirmed its intent to establish this center in passing the United States Greece defense and inter parliamentary Partnership Act of 2021, which was enacted as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022. So on repeated occasions, Congress has indicated its strong intent to move forward with this East med Energy Center.

The legislation explicitly notes that the United States Government should establish the US Eastern Mediterranean energy center as authorized by section 204, the eastern Mediterranean Energy and Security Partnership Act of 2019. Given the precarious state of global energy markets, and the impact that global conflicts such as the war on Ukraine, have had on energy security, it is important we continually work in partnership with our allies to explore energy solutions. The eastern Mediterranean energy center would serve as a critical venue to further this collaboration. And I urged support for this amendment to provide the necessary funds to establish the center.

And I acknowledge that you could be forgiven for wondering or being suspicious of two Greek American members of Congress coming forward for something that has to do with the eastern Mediterranean Gus bilirakis and myself, but I will say that primarily we're looking at this through the lens of two long standing members of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Gus and I and understanding how critical this particular resource established at the Department of Energy can be in furthering US energy security in that region. With that, I yield back and ask for support of the amendment.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Sure, thanks. A gentleman. gentleman yields back. Chair now recognizes Mr. Rosendale, for Montana, for Testimony in your amendments.

Rep. Matt Rosendale (R-Mont.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Chair, I've got six amendments across four of the appropriation bills. So I appreciate the patience, and I certainly appreciate the Committee allowing me to come before you today. I submitted three members of the financial services and General Government Appropriations Act, my first amendment number 68, would prohibit funds made available by this act to be used for the office of gun violence prevention. Since President Biden took office in January of 21.

Our second amendment rights have been under assault. And now with the stroke of a pen, President Biden created the Office of gun violence prevention, allowing his administration to bypass Congress and unilaterally implement the left's gun control agenda. This office will be overseen by Vice President Kamala Harris and staff with radical former gun control lobbyist allowing the swamp to have total control of Biden's gun control agenda. 70% of Montana households own a firearm, which is why I will not stand by and allow Joe Biden to use taxpayer funds to create an unconstitutional office that infringes on our Second Amendment rights.

It's unacceptable for the hard earned tax dollars of gun owners in Montana to fund the salaries of unelected gun grabbing bureaucrats who are hell bent on branding law abiding responsible gun owners as criminals. My second amendment number 69 would prohibit any funds made available by this site from being used to regulate direct primary arrangements as an insurance product or any form of health plan that makes an individual and eligible to contribute to health savings account. Direct primary care arrangements are innovative, alternative payment model that improves access to high functioning health care with a simple, flat affordable membership they direct primary care gives patients more access to doctors and allows doctors to spend less time filling out burdensome paperwork. A recent study for the Society of Actuaries by Milliman shows that employers offering DPCC in addition to health insurance can achieve savings of up to 20% of the total cost of care, plus 40% and a 53.6% reduction in emergency room claim costs Okay, my amendment is necessary because the IRS is currently treating DPC arrangement as other health coverage, but only for eligibility rules for health savings accounts in the Internal Revenue Code.

This is a dated and incorrect interpretation of DPC arrangement, which our S has the authority to update. Health Savings Accounts are part of the solution to incentivize better health outcomes, and we should not do anything to restrict their usage. My third amendment number 124, prohibits funds made available by this act from being used for in vitro fertilization. I feel for couples that are having difficult times conceiving children naturally, but my amendment would prevent any taxpayer funding from going towards IVF procedures or administrative expenses in connection with any health plan under the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program, which provides any benefits or coverage for in vitro fertilization.

The reasoning is simple. IVF destroys more life than Planned Parenthood. Think about that. And if you believe that life begins at conception, as I do, and I you know that you do, Mr. Chair, there is no difference between abortion and the destruction of an IVF embryo.

Many of you co sponsored the life begins at conception bill, and that is simply supporting this amendment. The Office of Personnel Management, which oversees the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, says 14 carriers were offered 24 coverage options for IVF. my Democratic colleagues offered the amendment during the appropriations Committee markup that would have required all carriers to offer plans covering IVF without any conscious protections. I do truly feel sorry for couples that cannot bear a child naturally.

But we should take that money and utilize it to allocate services instead of put it towards the root cause of infertility. One report from the United Kingdom suggested that an average of 15 embryos are created in each cycle, such that only 7% of all created embryos result in live birth. The remaining 93% are either destroyed or indefinitely frozen, with tiny odds of ever being implanted. I'm also greatly concerned with the pre implementation genetic testing that happens through IVF better known as eugenics, more than 75% of all fertility clinics offering this testing insinuating that children with disabilities do not matter.

Children born through IVF compared to natural conception have a higher likelihood of negative health outcome, including cancer, autism, or congenital heart defect. As bioethicists. Oliver Donovan argues, there is a world of difference between accepting the risk of a disabled child where that risk is imposed upon us by nature, and ourselves imposing that risk in pursuit of our own purposes. It is therefore completely unacceptable for the federal government to pay up to \$30,000 on an elective procedure, when we should be focused on addressing the root cause of infertility or promoting adoption.

I submitted one I submitted one amendment to the Department of Interior environment, and related agencies Appropriations Act number 27. That prohibits fund to implement administer or enforce the threatened species of the Northern Continental Divide ecosystem population of grizzly bears under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Montana has the largest grizzly bear population in the lower 48 states, with significant growth in both the northern Continental Divide and the Greater Yellowstone populations. From about 819 75.

The population has grown to nearly 1100 In the northern Continental Divide population alone, totaling more than 1900 wild bears in the lower 48. Despite thriving populations, the US Fish and Wildlife Service keeps revising recovery goals, retaining control and diminishing our landowners motivation for conservation measures. Human bear conflicts are steadily increasing as Baris expand into new areas posing risks to communities for from the described habitat. They are habituating they are becoming

completely unafraid of human encounters.

Just last year, motors struck a grizzly bear near Bonner, Montana, our south where they typically room on Thursday of just last week, a 72 year old man was out picking huckleberries in the national Flathead National Forest and had to shoot a grizzly bear after being viciously attacked and hospitalized. On July 18 2020, for the Montana Fish, Wildlife and force had to put a bear down after the bear broke into homes. And around in and around Gardiner, Montana, was breaking into homes. Imagine waking up to find a bear in your kitchen, you walk down at midnight to get that last piece of chocolate cake that was in the refrigerator and you come face to face with a grizzly bear.

This isn't yogi and boo boo. We're talking about things that will kill you, it will eat you. It's very very serious. In 2022, there were nearly 150 confirmed livestock predation cases in Montana, costing residents hundreds of 1000s of dollars and causing fear and sleepless nights for Montana ranchers.

Grizzly bears can kill our main people as they expand into cities. These conflicts will only increase this amendment will ensure that Montana not the federal government oversees the management of this population. Montana has proven they're able to manage population as the wolf was firstly listed in 2011. And the northern rocky mountain wolf population remains the listed in Montana.

Under the Montana Department Fish, Wildlife and Parks management of the population of wolves has grown every year, since we've had management control to an estimated 1700. The science does not support the listing of the Northern Continental Divide ecosystem Grizzlies as threatened However, any attempts to delist any species by the US Fish and Wildlife Service have been reported repeatedly blocked by activist judges. It's time to fix this issue and allow Montanans to protect their lives, their livestock and their livelihoods from threat posed by grizzly bears. I submitted one amendment to the energy and water development and related agencies Appropriation Act number 10 that would prohibit funds from being used to transfer or delegate control or maintenance responsibility of the lower Yellowstone fish bypass channel to any non federal entity.

The lower Yellowstone irrigation project was established in 1902 was designed solely to provide irrigation water to farmers in eastern Montana and western North Dakota serving many communities and roughly 55,000 acres of farmland irrigated farm Graham. This project specializes in water distribution, not managing a fish fish bypass channel for endangered species like the pallid sturgeon. The fish bypass channel was introduced in 2007 was meant to address species conservation and the Yellowstone River location was selected over the lower Missouri because of the huge cost savings, not because the people in Montana or Dawson county requested it. The Corps of Engineers selected it because it was going to save them money.

But now the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation are trying to shift the costs and responsibilities to the irrigators, even after their shoddy construction, which has required work immediately following the completion of the project and will continue to do so in the future. This despite there being no formal agreement, and the bypass channel having no operational connection to the project's irrigation duties, our farmers are already struggling with economic pressures and cannot afford this additional burden. This amendment ensures the federal agencies cannot offload their responsibilities on to those local communities. It's time for the federal government to be accountable for its decisions not to unjustly transfer those costs to those who are unprepared and financially stretched.

And finally, I submit one amendment to the Agriculture Rural Development Food and Drug Administration and related agencies Appropriation Act number 36. That prohibits funds made available by this act from going towards the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. The purpose of the dietary guidelines, Guidelines for Americans is to provide American people with advice on what to eat and drink and build a healthy diet that promotes healthy growth and development, help prevent diet related chronic disease and meet nutrient needs. The Committee is tasked with reviewing the current body of nutrition science on specific topics and questions and developing a scientific report.

That includes its independent science based advice for HHS and USDA to consider. A recent report found that 13 of the 20 members had high risk, medium risk or possible conflicts of interest. One Committee member has been paid over \$30,000 in consulting fees from pharmaceutical companies that manufacture OB City magic medication including will go V and ozempic. It is a moral travesty that we have allowed our dietary guidelines to be corrupted by big pharmaceutical companies that profit when Americans are sick.

These companies are not concerned about American self as chronic diseases lead to more profits. I wrote a letter to Secretary Vilsack in November of 2023, demanding he addressed the conflicts of interest, and he didn't even bother responding.

Congress should not give another dollar to the Committee until they are free of corruption and undue influence. Mr. Chairman, again, I thank you and the Committee for your patience, and I would appreciate your support and making all of these amendments in order.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Thank you. For us back here. Thanks, the gentleman, the gentleman from Minnesota is recognized as being on your amendments.

Rep. Pete Stauber (R-Minn.)

Thank you, Chairman Burgess and Ranking Member McGovern. I have offered a few amendments to each of the bills being discussed today. But I would like to highlight three amendments to HR 8998, the Department of the Interior, environment and related agencies Appropriations Act and one amendment to HR 8773. The financial services and General Government Appropriations Act, amendment number 105 to HR 8990 ensure states and other cooperating entities that provide search and rescue services on federal lands can receive reimbursement in northern Minnesota the St.

Louis County rescue squad assists people lost or injured in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, federal land in my district, which is Federal federal land in my district, according to Duluth News Tribune article, the squad's reported budget is about \$450,000 per year, however, with roughly 30,000 hours volunteers members dedicated to the cause each year. It is estimated that the squad provides about 3.5 million in free labor annually. Recently, tragedy struck the PwC BW ca when a couple of canoeist fell over curtain falls, the St. Louis County rescue squad spent 18 days on a search and rescue mission and of the 95 members of the St.

Louis rescues county rescue squad 61 took part in the curtain falls mission. Combined, they worked almost 6000 hours. During a recent meeting I had with Captain Rick Slaton he estimated that the cost of the mission was around \$150,000 For that rescue. As a former law enforcement officer, I know that rescue squads are critical to ensuring the safety of constituencies and the many tourists that visit each year during a search and rescue mission every second counts and we need these crews to have the resources necessary to stay on top of their game.

As the bill currently reads the wildlife wildland fire management account can can be used to reimburse states and other cooperating agencies for services provided in response to wildfire and other emergencies or disasters. This amendment simply clarifies that search and rescue is a part of that reimbursement category. This will ensure that rescue squads can continue to conduct their vital services. My other two amendments HR 8998 addressed the continued productive industrial use of the Superior National Forest in northern Minnesota.

Amendment number 152 prohibits any funds from the Interior Appropriations Bill from being used to designate the Boundary Waters Canoe Area wilderness as a national monument under the Antiquities Act, and amendment 154 prohibits any funds from the bill from being used to expand the wilderness area. When the wilderness area was created in 1978. Through the Boundary Waters Wilderness Act, it was made abundantly clear. The Superior National Forest is and shall always remain a working industrial forest.

In fact, during debate over the 1978 Act, members of Congress, including then Representative for the eighth congressional district in Minnesota Congressman Jim Oberstar argued that our ability to responsibly mine and harvest timber must be protected. My minutes will simply ensure that the administration continues to follow a congressional intent and will prevent any overreach by the executive branch to increase the footprint of the wilderness area or designate the Boundary Waters as a national monument. These amendments simply protect our way of life in northern Minnesota and protect the responsible industrial use of the forest, which has been the backbone of the northern Minnesota economy for well over a century. Finally, I'd like to discuss amendment 235 to HR 8773.

In rural America, postal workers are more than just mail carriers. They are the lifeline that keeps our communities connected. They deliver essential medications bring news from loved ones and provide access to crucial services that many urban areas take for granted. Our rural postal workers often travel long distances and all kinds of weather to ensure that every home no matter how remote receives it mail.

They are a trusted presence in our communities often going above and beyond their official duties to check on elderly residents and offer a friendly face in isolated areas. However, the challenges faced by rural postal workers are significant. The demands of the job are high and the distances they must cover can be daunting. recruiting and retaining postal workers in these areas has become increasingly difficult, leading to staffing shortages and delays in mail delivery.

My amendments aim to address this by providing support specifically for the hiring and retention of rural postal workers. By making these positions more attractive and sustainable, we can ensure that our rural residents receive the reliable service they depend on. This is not just about delivering mail. It's about maintaining the social and economic fabric of our rural communities.

I asked that all my all my amendments, we made an order and I welcome the committee's questions and I yield back.
gentleman

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Yields back Chair. Thanks, gentlemen, I want to welcome gentlelady from Wyoming Miss Hageman to the panel and invite your testimony on your amendments.

Rep. Harriet Hageman (R-Wyo.)

Thank you Chairman Burgess, Ranking Member McGovern, and members of the rules Committee for the opportunity to testify on my amendment number 10 to HR 9027. My amendment would block the animal Plant Health Inspection Service and agency of the Department of Agriculture from enforcing its rule titled use of electronic identification ear tags as official identification in cattle and bison. This rule mandates electronic identification or EIB ear tags for cattle and bison moving in interstate commerce. This rule is a solution in search of a problem and race as a myriad of concerns, especially for small and independent ranchers.

The folks I serve as the lone Representative from the state of Wyoming, I'd like to focus on four primary concerns with this policy. First, that it is an unfunded federal mandate. Second, that it threatens further vertical integration of the food supply chain. Third, the rule raises serious privacy concerns which have not been resolved.

And fourth, it does not comply with the realities of ranching operations. This rule is a mandate plain and simple, as non compliance means ranchers are locked out of their traditional markets. ranchers in Wyoming are required to move their cattle interstate for processing and to get to market stifling choice and requiring compliance. APHIS estimates that the rule would cost \$26.1 million per year.

Yet this is a gross underestimate calculated solely using the cost of the tags when there is a vast network of technology needed to operate an E ID system. You have to report language of this bill provides just \$15 million under funding an estimated that an estimate that we already know to be incorrect, since cost prohibitive non compliance would lock small producers out of their traditional markets. corporate agriculture operations on the other hand, many of which have voluntarily implemented EIB, based on access to capital will be able to fill these gaps for companies own over 80% of beef processing in the United States. Alongside corporate retailers.

There is an attempt to control the food supply chain from hook to grocery shelf and this mandate will further this trend. Government tracking of livestock and the data retention requirements in the rule raise serious privacy concerns. during the comment period of the proposed rule producers raised these concerns and talked about them. In the final rule.

However, APHIS was not able to give a definitive answer that rancher and her data would be protected, only stating its belief that it would be covered. For such a radical change to doing business. The inability to give a concrete answer is more than worrisome. Finally, the goal and vision and this policy does not comply with the reality of the labor involved in applying these electronic tags.

Since applies to cattle and bison over 18 months of age. Tagging livestock after birth means putting livestock through shoots and using other techniques which are not common practices, or cost effective for small ranching operations, or on those that are required to use common allotments like we have in Wyoming. Last year when I offered a similar amendment, the inter tribal buffalo Council sent a letter in support, raising concern with how the rule doesn't align with tribal buffalo management. First tribes managed buffalo is wildlife not livestock, meaning they do not have roundups or the shoots necessary to tag bison.

Tribes also largely moved bison interstate to other reservations for the purpose of strengthening gene pools and adding genetic diversity to other herds. Yet they would be forced into this mandated disease tree A stability system designed for the food industry. I will close by saying once again that this is a solution in search of a problem. America already has an animal disease traceability system that the USDA put in place in 2013.

And we already produce the highest quality meat in the world. There is no reason to upend this system now. And in fact, all we need to do is to look at what happened in Ireland. In early 2022, Ireland adopted a mandatory ei D, and by August of

2023, they ordered the slaughter of over 41,000 head of cattle, not because of a disease outbreak, but because of blaming livestock producers for global warming or so called Climate Change.

Thank you, Matt. Again, Chairman Burgess and Ranking Member McGovern, and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Sure, thanks for Gentlelady Gentlelady yields back Chair. Thanks all of our witnesses today. You've done such a good job. I have no questions.

I'll use ministration. For

the sake of time,

I'll yield back. Mr. Chairman. gentleman yields back.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

I have no questions but I just want to ask unanimous consent to insert the testimony of Representative McCollum Cohn and Ramirez in the record.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Without objection, so ordered gentlelady from Minnesota. Gentlelady has no questions during the lead from Pennsylvania. No questions. Gentleman from Kentucky.

Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.)

Very quick question. If you could give a quick answer. Did Congress ever pass a law saying that APHIS should do electronic ID tags? No.

Thank you. I yield back.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Gentleman yields back. Seeing no other members wishing to ask questions. This panel is excused. Is there anyone else seeking to testify on HR 8773, HR 8997, HR 8998 and HR 9027.

Without objection, this closes the hearing portion of the meeting. Chair will be in receipt of a motion from a gentleman from Minnesota Miss Fischbach.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach (R-Minn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I moved the Committee grant HR 8997. The energy and water development and related agencies Appropriation Act of 2025. A structured rule, the rule waives all points of order against against consideration of the bill.

The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the Chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on appropriations or their respective designees. The rule provides that an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of the rules print 118 Dash 42 shall be considered as adopted and the bill as amended shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of orders against provisions in the bill as amended. The rule makes an order only those amendments printed in part A of the rules Committee report amendments on block described in section three and pro forma amendments described in checks section for each amendment shall be considered only in the printed order and the report may be offered only by a by a member designated the report shall be considered as read shall be debated for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent shall not be subject to amendment except as provided in section four of the rule and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question.

All points of order against the amendments printed in part A of the rules Committee report or amendments on block described in section three of the rule are waived. The rule provides that the Chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee may offer amendments on block consisting of amendments printed in the part A of the rules Committee report, not

earlier disposed of amendments on block shall be considered as read shall be debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the Chair and the ranking minority member of the Committee on appropriations or their respective designees shall not be subject to amendment except as provided by section four of the rule and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rules provide that the Chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on appropriations or their respective designees may offer up to 10 Pro Forma amendments, each at any point for the purpose of debate. The rule provides one motion to recommit.

The rule further provides for consideration of HR 8998, the Department of the Interior environment and related agencies Appropriation Act 2025. Under a structure rule, the rule waives all points of orders against the consideration of the bill. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the Chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on appropriations or their irrespectie designee the rule provides that an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of the rules Committee print 118 Dash 41 shall be considered as adopted and the bill as amended shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against the provision in the bill as amended.

The rule makes an order only those amendments printed in part B of the rules Committee report amendments on block described in Section eight and proforma amendments described in Section nine. Each amendment shall be considered only in the printed order and the report may be offered only by a member designated and report shall be considered as read shall be debatable for a specified time in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent shall not be subject to amendment except as provided in Section nine of the rule, and shall not be subject to demand for division of the question. All points of order against the amendment printed in part B of the rules Committee reports or amendments on block described in Section Eight of the rule are waived. The rule provides that the Chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee may offer amendments on block consisting of amendments printed in part B of the rules Committee report, not earlier disposed of amendments on blocks shall be considered as read.

Show me debate. Debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the Chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on appropriations or their respective designees shall not be can subject to amendment except as provided by section nine of the rule and shall not be subject to demand for division with a question. The rule provides that the Chair and the ranking minority member of the Committee on appropriations or the respective designee may offer up to 10 Pro Forma members each at any point for the purpose of debate. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Thank you very much. You've now heard the motion. Is there any discussion or amendment?

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Sure, let me just point out for the record that Underwood was just read to us. Republicans got 123 amendments at Democrats get 27. I guess that's what Republican idea of fairness is. Anyway, I have an amendment to the rule.

I moved the Committee at language to the rule to provide a structured structured rules for each HR 8773. The Financial Services appropriations bill and HR 9027, the Agriculture Appropriations Bill making in order but not providing waivers for all amendments submitted to this Committee for each bill. As I said, in my opening, these bills have huge, huge problems. They are both lousy lousy bills.

But both these bills also support a lot of important programs. And if the if the programs funded in these bills were allowed to lapse, our mail wouldn't get delivered and vulnerable children want to get food to eat, it seems clear that it's time for the House to be given an opportunity to actually work its will fix these bills and fund these important programs. So this amendment would allow both bills to come to the floor for members to offer their amendments, and for members to raise points of order against any amendments that are not germane or otherwise rule compliant. It wouldn't be a free for all.

It would be legislating earlier as Fischbach said, and I quote, We are here to send these bills through Committee into the Senate. So let's do it. I will also remind anyone tempted to claim that it's a scheduling issue. That simply including these bills in this rule doesn't doesn't mean that they have to come up this week.

I urge a yes vote on my amendment to let these bills come to the House floor. I yield back my time. Sir.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Any further discussion on the amendment? Seeing none questions on the amendment? All those in favor signify by saying aye. Aye.

All those opposed say no. Opinions Chair the noes have it as he remembers not aggressively Roll Call. Roll call has been requested. The Clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk

[ROLL CALL]

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

The clerk will Report.

The Clerk

[ROLL CALL]

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

And the noes have it the amendment is not agreed to. Was there any other discussion or amendment to the agreement?

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.)

Let me just remind everybody, all my Republican friends just voted against making their own bills in order. I don't know what the hell we're doing here. But anyway, I have another amendment. I moved to Committee make an order amendment number nine to HR 8998, offered by Representative Stansbury, which was strike section 449, which prohibits funds appropriated by this act from being used to implement climate related executive orders.

Mr. Chairman, no matter how much the Republicans want to stick their head in the sand, it will not change the fact that climate change is real. It is science, instead of taking steps backwards to prevent any actions. To combat climate change. We should be working together to ensure this planet and the As climate is safeguarded for future generations, I urge a yes vote on my amendment.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Is there any further discussion on the amendment? Seeing none, the question is on the amendment, all those in favor signify by saying aye. Aye. All those opposed say no.

Penny has a Chair the noes have it for roll call. Roll call has been requested. The Clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk

[ROLL CALL]

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

And the noes have it the amendment is not agreed to any further discussion or amendment to the rule for purposes of Gentelady seek recognition.

Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-Pa.)

I have an amendment.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Let us recognize.

Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-Pa.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment to the rule, I would move the Committee making order amendment 43 to HR 8997, offered by Representative to which strikes sections 507 and 510. And amendment number 15, to HR 8998, offered

by Representative Sorenson, which would strike sections 446 and 447. These amendments strike sections in both the interior and energy and water appropriations bills, sections that would create a license to discriminate against LGBTQ plus people. As we've seen week after week, every Republican appropriations bill comes to us with anti LGBTQ provisions.

I understand this is consistent with Trump's project 2025 manifesto and the views expressed by his designated vice presidential candidate, but I don't think those views reflect the vast majority of Americans and it's a shame that every week we have to come up here and ask you again, to allow the hosts to vote on striking, discriminatory provisions, provisions that discriminate against our LGBTQ colleagues, neighbors constituents. So I think the amendments deserve a vote people have had enough of hate and I urge a yes vote on my amendments and yield back.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Gentlelady yields back so any further discussion on the amendment? Seeing no further discussion? The question is on the amendment those in favor signify by saying aye. Aye.

Those opposed say no. Opinions the Chair the noes have it. I would request a roll call the roll call vote has been requested. The Clerk will call.

The Clerk

[ROLL CALL]

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

And the noes have it. The amendment is not agreed to any further discussion or further amendment. Mr. Chairman Gentlelady is recognized.

Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-N.M.)

Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment to the rule. I move the Committee make an order amendment number 12. Offered by Representative Stanbury in which I am proud to co sponsor, the amendment incorporates the text of HR 2925, the mining regulatory clarity act of 2024.

This Republican appropriation bill that we are considering would give anyone the right to use occupy and conduct mining related operations on any public lands without paying fair market value, and without discovering the valuable mineral deposit under the claim. In essence, the bill is giving away America's public resources for free. It's giving away our public lands for free. Republicans are constantly talking about the risks of China.

Yet their bill would allow our adversaries like China to lock up public lands as nominal mining claims. If you truly believe that China and other adversaries pose a risk to our economic future, you should support this amendment to make sure our public lands stay in the hands of the American people. I yield back.

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

Gentlelady yields back any further discussion? Seeing none The question is on the amendment from the gentlelady from New Mexico all those in favor say aye. Aye. Those opposed say no.

Being the Chair the noes have it. Recorded recorded vote has been requested. The Clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk

[ROLL CALL]

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

And the noes have it the amendment is not agreed to further discussion or amendment. If not, the question is on the motion from the gentlelady from Minnesota. All those in favor will say Aye. Aye.

Those opposed no no pinion the Chair the eyes have it the motion is agreed to a roll call vote has been requested. The Clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk

[ROLL CALL]

Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

And the eyes have it the motion to report is agreed to. Accordingly the gentlelady from Minnesota was Fischbach will be managing this rule for the majority I'll be doing if the minority gentleman from Massachusetts for the minority. Without objection, the Committee is adjourned. [END]