

Mr. MEADOWS. Madam Speaker, I want to make a point that in this body now on 2 consecutive days, we have broken the rules of Congress to expedite things.

In this particular contempt resolution, I want to make sure that the RECORD reflects that we broke rule 2(f) on the committee about notice. It was brought to the attention of the chairman, and here we are again going and violating the rules of this House, not rules that the minority put in place, but rules that the majority put in place. We gave the chairman the chance to perfect this procedural problem, and yet they continued on to hold this contempt violation.

I can tell you, they may vote today to hold them in contempt, but it is a violation of Congress' very rules itself that should have been remedied. I ask that the gentleman opposite withdraws his resolution so that we can perfect this.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COMER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. ARMSTRONG).

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Madam Speaker, upon assuming the chairmanship of the committee in January 2019, the chairman of the Oversight and Reform Committee formally initiated an inquiry into Secretary Ross' decision to reinstitute the citizenship question on the 2020 census.

Just recently, as of June 27, 2019, the Supreme Court has issued a ruling. The Supreme Court ruled that the administration may ask a citizenship question, but rejected the rationale presented by Secretary Ross for adding the question on the 2020 census.

The committee's fact-finding is still active and ongoing. The administration is cooperating with the investigation. The DOC and the DOJ have produced 31,000 responsive documents—14,000 from the DOC and 17,000 from the DOJ. The committee has held six transcribed interviews with witnesses, and a seventh interview is expected.

In short, Madam Speaker, the Judiciary Committee has already held Bill Barr in contempt for not violating Federal law. And now the Oversight and Reform Committee is about to hold Bill Barr in contempt for cooperating with the committee. This is wrong. This is not how we are supposed to do business in this Chamber.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COMER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, this is such a disturbing time for those of us who have spent our adult lives trying to see that justice is done, laws are followed, and yet here we again come after Attorney General Bob Barr and another Cabinet official, Ross.

The truth is, I didn't really know Bob Barr when he got nominated. I knew that he was friends with Bob Mueller. That caused me concern. But it appears we have an attorney general who is concerned about justice and he is concerned about stopping injustices. And yet, we still have people who are wanting to cause as much trouble for the President and stop his administration from getting as much accomplished for the American people as possible.

It has got to stop at some point. It is like a game, we come here and we are going to hold him in contempt again. This is a double secret probation against Bob Barr. How many double, triple, quadruple secret probations are we going to do? This isn't going to amount to anything.

If you take this to any Federal judge to try to enforce it, he or she will look at the procedure and go: This is ridiculous. You are not going to have me hold the attorney general in contempt for trying to follow the law, and you are wanting to interrupt his efforts to follow the law. That is not happening.

So this is all about a show, when there is true injustice going on. Thank God that we have a President who wanted to see justice done. He knew he didn't collude. And now we have an attorney general who is trying to do the same thing.

Madam Speaker, let's say no to this contempt. Let's get back to doing the job that the American people want us to do.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COMER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I think that just about everyone who spoke on our side of the aisle made the factual points that this is not necessary. This resolution is an ongoing attempt by the majority party to try to do anything they can to disrupt the Presidency of our President of the United States.

Every country, just about, in the world asks the citizenship question. Mexico and Canada ask the citizenship question. In fact, the United Nations recommends that countries ask the citizenship question.

I don't for the life of me know why we would resort to this type of action in this body, especially after what happened yesterday. I wonder, Madam Speaker, is this an attempt to try to move the direction of the American people from their frustration at the lack of achievement by the majority party from a legislative standpoint to try to somehow enrage their anger at the President?

This is unnecessary. This is more political theater, and I urge the Members of this fine body to oppose this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Maryland has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, some of my colleagues have argued that holding Secretary Ross and Attorney General Barr in contempt of Congress is premature. That is simply not true. If anything, it is long overdue.

The Department of Commerce and the Department of Justice have failed to comply with congressional requests for more than a year. The Oversight and Reform Committee Democrats first asked for documents from the Department of Commerce in April of 2018 and from the Department of Justice May of 2018. Those requests were ignored.

When I became chairman, I renewed those requests. In response, the administration produced thousands of pages. But most of the documents were either heavily redacted, already public, or nonresponsive to the committee's request. So the committee narrowed its request and issued bipartisan subpoenas to compel production of that narrow group of documents. That was in April, more than 3 months ago.

I even asked Secretary Ross to meet with me personally. He refused.

And, last month, the committee passed the bipartisan resolution before us to hold Secretary Ross and Attorney General Barr in contempt of Congress. Still neither department has provided the documents that we have asked for.

So I have come to the floor to urge our Members to vote in favor of this. I do not, again, bring this lightly. This is not theater. This is about doing our job. This is about protecting the integrity of not only our census, but of our Congress.

Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to vote for this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the previous question is ordered on the resolution.

The question is on adoption of the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. COMER. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. PINGREE). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

INSPECTOR GENERAL PROTECTION
ACT

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1847) to require congressional notification for certain changes in status of inspectors general, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1847

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Inspector General Protection Act”.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE IN STATUS OF INSPECTOR GENERAL.

(a) CHANGE IN STATUS OF INSPECTOR GENERAL OF OFFICES.—Section 3(b) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) is amended—

(1) by inserting “, is placed on paid or unpaid non-duty status,” after “is removed from office”;

(2) by inserting “, change in status,” after “any such removal”; and

(3) by inserting “, change in status,” after “before the removal”.

(b) CHANGE IN STATUS OF INSPECTOR GENERAL OF DESIGNATED FEDERAL ENTITIES.—Section 8G(e)(2) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) is amended—

(1) by inserting “, is placed on paid or unpaid non-duty status,” after “office”;

(2) by inserting “, change in status,” after “any such removal”; and

(3) by inserting “, change in status,” after “before the removal”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. PRESIDENTIAL EXPLANATION OF FAILURE TO NOMINATE AN INSPECTOR GENERAL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 3349d the following new section:

“§ 3349e. Presidential explanation of failure to nominate an Inspector General

“If the President fails to make a formal nomination for a vacant Inspector General position that requires a formal nomination by the President to be filled within the period beginning on the date on which the vacancy occurred and ending on the day that is 210 days after that date, the President shall communicate, within 30 days after the end of such period, to Congress in writing—

“(1) the reasons why the President has not yet made a formal nomination; and

“(2) a target date for making a formal nomination.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to 3349d the following new item:

“3349e. Presidential explanation of failure to nominate an Inspector General.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply to any vacancy first occurring on or after that date.

SEC. 4. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be deter-

mined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROUDA) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure before us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to support the Inspector General Protection Act, which would improve the independence of inspectors general.

This bipartisan bill, introduced by Representative TED LIEU and Representative JODY HICE, would also address the disturbingly slow nomination of IGs that have been the norm across multiple administrations.

The bill would require notification of Congress 30 days prior to an IG being placed on leave. Such notification is already required prior to an IG being removed from duty.

The bill would also require the President to report to Congress if he has not nominated an IG after 210 days of a vacancy occurring.

The report must include the reasons for failing to make the nomination and a target date for doing so. The requirement will hopefully prod the executive branch to nominate IG’s in a more timely manner.

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Inspectors general provide critical oversight and accountability within Federal agencies, and the positions need to be filled more quickly than is currently the case.

Madam Speaker, I urge Members to support this bipartisan bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KELLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 1847, the Inspector General Protection Act. I thank Representative TED LIEU for working in a bipartisan manner on this legislation. H.R. 1847 will help ensure that inspectors general vacancies across Federal agencies will be filled in a timely manner.

Inspectors general play an important role in improving the operations of the Federal Government. They help combat fraud, waste, and abuse throughout executive branch departments and

agencies and promote a resourceful and effective Federal Government.

They have assisted us with discharging one of our most important responsibilities, shining the light on areas of the government that need improved efficiency and economy.

However, throughout both Republican and Democratic administrations, there have been numerous vacant inspector general positions. Certain agencies have experienced prolonged periods of absent inspector general leadership.

For example, the Department of the Interior has been without a permanent inspector general since 2009. Likewise, there are approximately 13 vacant inspector general positions for agencies covered by the Inspector General Act.

This bill would require the President to timely notify Congress of a failure to nominate an inspector general for a given agency. The President would also be required to explain why a nomination has not yet been made and provide a target date for that nomination.

The bill also calls for increased transparency by requiring the President to notify Congress if an inspector general is placed on leave or changes status.

Inspectors general are an indispensable tool to Congress. By ensuring the Federal Government is adequately staffed with inspectors general, we are reaffirming our commitment to rooting out government fraud, waste, and abuse.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROUDA. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. TED LIEU), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. TED LIEU of California. Madam Speaker, first, let me thank the gentleman from California (Mr. ROUDA) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLER) for their comments in support of this legislation.

I rise today in support of my bipartisan bill, H.R. 1847, the Inspector General Protection Act, which will enhance the independence and integrity of our IGs.

Since Congress passed the original Inspector General Act in 1978, these government watchdogs have played a crucial role in our democracy. They root out waste, fraud, mismanagement, and abuse at all levels of government, saving American taxpayers billions of dollars annually and ensuring that government programs benefit the people.

According to the nonpartisan Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, taxpayers saved \$32.7 billion in fiscal year 2017 from audit recommendations. That is a \$22 return on every dollar invested.

Unfortunately, both Democratic and Republican administrations have hamstrung our IGs with persistent vacancies and underfunded budgets. According to the Project on Government