



**Legislative Bulletin.....July 24, 2012**

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**H.R. 459 – Federal Reserve Transparency Act of 2011 (Paul, R-TX)**

**Order of Business:** The bill is scheduled to be considered under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

**Summary:** This [legislation](#) will require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal Reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States before the end of 2012.

The report on the audit shall be submitted by the Comptroller General before the end of the 90-day period beginning on the date on which such audit is completed and made available to Congress. The “report shall include a detailed description of the finding and conclusion of the Comptroller General with respect to the audit that is the subject of the report, together with such recommendations for legislative or administrative action as the Comptroller General may determine to be appropriate.”

The Comptroller General shall also conduct an audit of the review of loan files of homeowners in foreclosure in 2009 or 2010. This audit shall at least consider:

- The guidance given by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System to independent consultants.
- The factors considered by independent consultants when evaluating loan files, the results obtained by the independent consultants pursuant to those reviews.
- The determinations made by the independent consultants regarding the nature and extent of financial injury sustained by each homeowner as well as the level and type of remediation offered to each homeowner.
- The specific measures taken by the independent consultants to verify, confirm or rebut the assertions and representations made by supervised financial institutions.

This legislation has overwhelming bipartisan support from 320 cosponsors.

**Background:** A version of this bill passed the house in what would later become the Dodd-Frank Act. However, the audit provisions of that legislation were much weaker and did not require a full audit.

Additional information on monetary policy and the Federal Reserve by the Congressional Research Service can be found [here](#), as well as their report on the Structure and Functions of the Federal Reserve System, which can be found [here](#).

**Committee Action:** This legislation was introduced on January 26, 2012, and referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform where a mark-up session was held on June 27, 2012. H.R. 459 was reported out on July 17, 2012 (Committee Report [H. Rept. 112-607](#)).

**Administration Position:** No Statement of Administration Policy is available.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** According to the [CBO](#), implementing H.R. 459 would cost \$5 million over the 2013-2014 period.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?:** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?:** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Earmarks?:** No.

**Constitutional Authority:** [According](#) to its sponsor, “This legislation is authorized by Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution: “‘To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures’ and ‘To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States.’”

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## **H.R. 4157 – Preserving America’s Family Farms Act (Latham, R-IA)**

**Order of Business:** The bill is scheduled to be considered under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

**Summary:** This [legislation](#) will prohibit the Secretary of Labor from finalizing a proposed rule under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 related to farm child labor.

The legislation includes findings that “Department of Labor regulations should not adversely impact the longstanding tradition of youth working on farms where they can gain valuable skills and lessons on hard work, character, and leadership.” And that, the “proposed regulations would obstruct the opportunity for youth to find rewarding employment” and would “limit opportunities for young farmers wishing to pursue a career in agriculture”.

The legislation mandates that the Secretary of Labor shall not reissue the proposed rule, or a similar rule to, “Child Labor Regulations, Orders and Statements of Interpretation; Child Labor Violations – Civil Money Penalties” (published at 76 Fed. Reg. 54836 (September 2, 2011)).

**Background:** The Department of Labor’s proposed “Child Labor Regulations, Orders and Statements of Interpretation; Child Labor Violations – Civil Money Penalties” can be found [here](#).

In April, the Department of Labor announced that it was withdrawing the rules due to concern from the public over how they could affect family farms.

**Committee Action:** This legislation was introduced on March 7, 2012 and referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

**Administration Position:** No Statement of Administration Policy is available.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** No CBO score available.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?:** No. The legislation decreases the size of the federal government.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?:** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Earmarks?:** No.

**Constitutional Authority:** [According](#) to its sponsor, “Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 1; and Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.”

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**H.R. 5986 - To amend the African Growth and Opportunity Act to extend the third-country fabric program and to add South Sudan to the list of countries eligible for designation under that Act, to make technical corrections to the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States relating to the textile and apparel rules of origin for the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement, to approve the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003, and for other purposes (Camp, R-MI)**

**Order of Business:** The bill is scheduled to be considered on July 23, 2012, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

**Summary:**

**African Growth and Opportunity Act:** The legislation extends, through 2015, preferential treatment of garments produced in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA, P.L. 106-200). This provision is set to expire on September 30, 2012.

This legislation also adds the Republic of South Sudan to the list of countries eligible for this preferential treatment.

**Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement:** The legislation makes several technical corrections and clarifications to the CAFTA-DR. These corrections include specifying definitions, and modifications to the Textile and Apparel Rules of Origin. Congress passed the implementing bill on July 28, 2005 (P.L. 109-53) and CAFTA-DR entered into force with El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala by July 1, 2006, the Dominican Republic on March 1, 2007, and Costa Rica on January 1, 2009.

**Sanctions on Burma:** The legislation also authorizes the renewal of the import restrictions contained in section 3(a)(1) and section 3A (b)(1) and (c)(1) of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003. Congress must renew these import restrictions annually in order to keep them in place.

**Customs User Fees:** The legislation extends certain Customs User Fees from August 2, 2021 through October 22, 2021, and from December 8, 2020 through October 29, 2021. These fees are collected by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are to “ensure all carriers, passengers and their personal effects entering the U.S. are compliant with U.S. customs laws.”

**Additional Information:** AGOA extends preferential treatment to U.S. imports from eligible countries that are pursuing market reform measures. According to CRS, there are currently 27 countries that qualify for the third-country fabric provision. This allows for duty-free treatment of apparel assembled in one or more lesser-developed SSA countries regardless of the country of origin of the fabric, subject to a cap. According to CRS, lesser-developed countries are defined in AGOA as those with a per capita gross national product of less than \$1,500 per year as measured by the World Bank.

The Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act (P.L. 108-61) requires the President to impose a ban on the import of products of Burma; freeze assets of certain Burmese officials; block U.S. support for loans from international financial institutions; and ban visas for certain Burmese officials.

The Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act requires the President to ban products from Burma until the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) has made substantial and measurable progress to end human rights violations, cease violating workers rights (including the use of forced child labor and child-soldiers). It also prohibits imports from Burma until the SPDC releases all political prisoners, allows freedom of speech and the press, allows freedom of association, and permits the peaceful exercise of religion, and agrees with the National League for Democracy (a Burmese political party), and Burma’s ethnic nationalities, on the transfer of power to a civilian government accountable to the people of Burma through democratic elections under the rule of law.

These sanctions were last extended via [H.R. 2608](#) (P.L. 112-36) and will expire July 26, 2012. For more information on the import ban on Burmese products, please see this [CRS report](#).

**Committee Action:** H.R. 5986 was introduced on June 21, 2012, and was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee, which took no public action.

**Administration Position:** No Statement of Administration Policy is available.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** A report from CBO detailing the cost of H.R. 5986 is unavailable. Similar legislation, S. 3326, is reported by CBO to “reduce revenues by \$59 million in 2013, increase revenues by \$4 million over the 2013-2017 period, and reduce revenues by \$192 million over the 2013-2022 period.”

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?:** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?:** No.