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

Madam Speaker, 18 years have passed since President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act into law. While that bill struck down many barriers affecting disabled Americans, its potential has yet to be realized. This summer, the Supreme Court decisions that have restricted ADA coverage for people suffering from illnesses such as diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer, to name a few. Today, this House takes the first step to finally secure the full promise of the original bill.

The bill that the House is voting on this afternoon has undergone a number of changes since I first introduced it in the 109th Congress. Today's ADA Amendments Act of 2008 is a compromise that has the support of a broad and balanced coalition. Business groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the HR Policy Association, and the National Association of Manufacturers all back this bill. In addition, advocates for the disability community, including the American Association of People with Disabilities, the Epilepsy Foundation, and the National Disability Rights Network, join in support.

Majority Leader HOYER and I introduced the ADA Restoration Act last summer. We did so to enable disabled Americans utilizing the ADA to focus on the discrimination that they have experienced rather than having to first prove that their conditions are covered under the scope of the ADA's protection. Today's bill makes it clear that Congress intended the ADA's coverage to be broad and to cover anyone who faces unfair discrimination because of a disability. To that end, we are submitting for the RECORD a statement outlining our legal intent and analysis of the new definition, as changed by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

The ADA Amendments Act makes changes to the original ADA, the primary one being that it will easier for people with disabilities to qualify for protection under the ADA. This is done by establishing that the definition of disability is to be interpreted broadly. Another important change clarifies that the ameliorative efforts of mitigating measures are not to be considered in determining whether a person has a disability. This provision eliminates the Catch-22 that currently exists described by a man from New York (Mr. NADLER), where individuals subjected to discrimination on the basis of their disabilities are unable to invoke the ADA's protections because they are not considered people with disabilities and are therefore removed from the scope of the law.

It is important to note that this bill is not one-sided. It is a fair product that is workable for employers and businesses. The bill contains the requirement that an impairment be defined as one that substantially limits a major life activity in order to be considered a disability. There is also an exception in the mitigating measures provision for ordinary eyeglasses and contact lenses. Further, the bill excludes from coverage impairments that are transitory and minor.

The ADA has been one of the most effective civil rights laws passed by Congress. Its continued effectiveness is paramount to ensuring that the transformation of our Nation has undergone and continues in the future. That the guarantees and promises on which this country was established continue to be recognized on behalf of all of its citizens.

I appreciate Majority Leader HOYER's efforts to bring the ADA Amendments Act to the floor, and I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of it.

Finally, I'd like to pay tribute to my wife, Cheryl, who is the national chairman of the board of the American Association for People with Disabilities. Her tireless efforts have really spread the word amongst many Members of Congress about the need for this legislation. I believe that this legislation is necessary so that people like her do not have barriers in terms of seeking employment. And I appreciate, also, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle listening to her, even when they didn't have a choice.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the distinguished majority leader, who was an original sponsor of the bill some 18 years ago, for an undivided minute.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the distinguished chairman of the Judiciary Committee for yielding, and I thank him for his efforts.

I want to thank his staff, as well, who have been extraordinary. Heather, in particular, has had her virtues reaped by Dr. Abouchar of my staff, and I thank her.

I want to thank Jim SENSENBRENNER. I want to thank Cheryl, as well, who has been extraordinary help on the Americans with Disabilities Act and with this Restoration Act. She has been a giant in her leadership. And I...