

nuclear materials against the nation and of global infectious disease, public health, food, agricultural, and veterinary issues; (2) support homeland security-focused risk analysis and risk assessments of such homeland security hazards by providing relevant quantitative and no quantitative threat information; (3) leverage homeland security intelligence capabilities and structures to enhance prevention, protection, response, and recovery efforts with respect to a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear attack; and (4) share information and provide tailored analytical support on these threats to state, local, and tribal authorities as well as other national biosecurity and biodefense stakeholders.

I am pleased that H.R. 2200 incorporates an amendment by Congresswoman MCSALLY that directs the department to establish chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) intelligence and information sharing functions of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security and to require dissemination of information analyzed by the Department to entities with responsibilities relating to homeland security.

The Nation's chemical facilities represent a terrorist target that must be protected.

It is my hope that this bill will improve upon current legislation authorizing the Department of Homeland Security to regulate security practices at the Nation's chemical facilities.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that we must equip ourselves to be able to detect attacks of a CBRN nature.

H.R. 2200 ensures a standardized communication platform for need to know industries dealing with such sensitive information.

There is no room for error when it comes to our nation's security.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting to pass, H.R. 2200, the "CBRN Intelligence and Information Sharing Act of 2015."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2200, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. 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 motion will be postponed.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS ACT

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 615) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to take administrative action to achieve and maintain interoperable communications capabilities among the components of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act" or the "DHS Interoperable Communications Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the term "Department" means the Department of Homeland Security;

(2) the term "interoperable communications" has the meaning given that term in section 701(d) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section 3; and

(3) the term "Under Secretary for Management" means the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security.

SEC. 3. INCLUSION OF INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES IN RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNDER SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT.

Section 701 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 341) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(4), by inserting before the period at the end the following: ", including policies and directives to achieve and maintain interoperable communications among the components of the Department"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(d) INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'interoperable communications' has the meaning given that term in section 7303(g) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (6 U.S.C. 194(g))."

SEC. 4. STRATEGY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary for Management shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a strategy, which shall be updated as necessary, for achieving and maintaining interoperable communications among the components of the Department, including for daily operations, planned events, and emergencies, with corresponding milestones, that includes the following:

(1) An assessment of interoperability gaps in radio communications among the components of the Department, as of the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) Information on efforts and activities, including current and planned policies, directives, and training, of the Department since November 1, 2012 to achieve and maintain interoperable communications among the components of the Department, and planned efforts and activities of the Department to achieve and maintain such interoperable communications.

(3) An assessment of obstacles and challenges to achieving and maintaining interoperable communications among the components of the Department.

(4) Information on, and an assessment of, the adequacy of mechanisms available to the Under Secretary for Management to enforce and compel compliance with interoperable communications policies and directives of the Department.

(5) Guidance provided to the components of the Department to implement interoperable communications policies and directives of the Department.

(6) The total amount of funds expended by the Department since November 1, 2012 and projected future expenditures, to achieve interoperable communications, including on equipment, infrastructure, and maintenance.

(7) Dates upon which Department-wide interoperability is projected to be achieved for voice,

data, and video communications, respectively, and interim milestones that correspond to the achievement of each such mode of communication.

(b) SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL.—Together with the strategy required under subsection (a), the Under Secretary for Management shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate information on—

(1) any intra-agency effort or task force that has been delegated certain responsibilities by the Under Secretary for Management relating to achieving and maintaining interoperable communications among the components of the Department by the dates referred to in subsection (a)(7); and

(2) who, within each such component, is responsible for implementing policies and directives issued by the Under Secretary for Management to so achieve and maintain such interoperable communications.

SEC. 5. REPORT.

Not later than 100 days after the date on which the strategy required under section 4(a) is submitted, and every 2 years thereafter for 6 years, the Under Secretary for Management shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the status of efforts to implement the strategy required under section 4(a), including the following:

(1) Progress on each interim milestone referred to in section 4(a)(7) toward achieving and maintaining interoperable communications among the components of the Department.

(2) Information on any policies, directives, guidance, and training established by the Under Secretary for Management.

(3) An assessment of the level of compliance, adoption, and participation among the components of the Department with the policies, directives, guidance, and training established by the Under Secretary for Management to achieve and maintain interoperable communications among the components.

(4) Information on any additional resources or authorities needed by the Under Secretary for Management.

SEC. 6. APPLICABILITY.

Sections 4 and 5 shall only apply with respect to the interoperable communications capabilities within the Department and components of the Department to communicate within the Department.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As the chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, I rise today in support of H.R. 615, the Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act, of which I am proud

to be a cosponsor. This bill was introduced by the gentleman from New Jersey, the subcommittee's ranking member, Mr. PAYNE.

The bill amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to include, among the responsibilities of the Department of Homeland Security's Under Secretary for Management, achieving and maintaining interoperable communications among the Department's components.

H.R. 615 addresses the findings and recommendations of a November 2012 DHS Office of Inspector General report, which stated that the Department does not have the appropriate oversight or governance structure to ensure communications interoperability among its components. It is vital that the Department's components are able to effectively communicate day to day and, most importantly, during emergencies.

In response to the findings of this inspector general's report, I joined Chairman McCaul and Oversight and Management Efficiency Subcommittee Chairman PERRY in requesting a review of this issue by the Government Accountability Office. Their report, which was released in March, found that nearly 3 years after the inspector general's report, communications problems persist in the Department and among its components. In particular, Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel reported to the GAO that the lack of interoperability in some cases along the border resulted in missed apprehensions and jeopardized agent safety.

My district is on the southwest border. I know the challenges our Border Patrol agents, CBP officers, and ICE agents face in meeting their vital missions. It is unacceptable that they lack the tools and training necessary to communicate with each other. This bill seeks to make this more of a priority at the headquarters level.

In order to ensure the Department is taking the necessary steps to achieve and maintain interoperable communications capabilities, H.R. 615 requires the Department's Under Secretary for Management to submit an interoperable communications strategy to the Committee on Homeland Security no later than 180 days after enactment and to periodically report to Congress on efforts to implement this strategy.

This bill passed the House in February by a vote of 379-0. I appreciate the swift action of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee under the leadership of my friend, Chairman JOHNSON. Their thoughtful additions have served to further improve this bill. I urge all Members to join me in supporting it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of the Senate amendment to H.R. 615, the Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act.

In November 2012, the inspector general of the Department of Homeland Security issued an assessment of the interoperable communications capability among DHS components. The inspector general found that, of the 479 field radios that attempted to communicate on a specific common channel, only one user could do so. That is a 99 percent failure rate.

In short, DHS, which is the Federal entity charged with providing guidance to State and local governments to improve interoperable emergency communications, was not practicing what it preached. The inspector general found that DHS' interoperable challenges were not technological in nature. Rather, they were attributed to the fact that there was no one leading the effort to drive changes in the field. Further, there were no policies in place to ensure that the 123,000 radio users at DHS understood how to use the communications equipment issued to them.

Throughout my tenure on the Committee on Homeland Security, I have repeatedly sought opportunities to drive home the message that interoperable communications are critical to the Homeland Security mission at the Federal, State, and local levels.

Addressing this fundamental operational challenge is consistent with the DHS Unity of Effort initiative. So it would seem that the timing is right for real progress. However, late last month, we learned from the inspector general that, nearly 3 years after the issuance of the first report, DHS' components' inability to communicate effectively on the DHS common channel persists and that DHS has not completed the corrective actions necessary to resolve the problem. The inspector general's most recent findings confirm that it is going to take directing the Department in law to get this done. That is why I was happy to support Ranking Member Donald Payne, Jr., when he introduced this legislation.

H.R. 615 would put DHS components on the path to achieving interoperable communications by directing the Department's Under Secretary for Management to develop a strategy to achieve interoperability. The taxpayers have spent \$430 million on interoperable communications capabilities at the Department so far. In this austere fiscal climate, we cannot afford to waste more money investing in communications capabilities when DHS lacks the policies that are sure to be effective.

With the help of full committee Chairman McCaul and subcommittee Chairwoman MCSALLY, the Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act passed the House unanimously earlier this year. Subsequently, our Senate counterparts approved H.R. 615 by unanimous consent with some enhancements. I urge my colleagues to concur with the Senate amendment to H.R. 615 and send this bill to the President's desk.

The inspector general's report identifying the urgent interoperable commu-

nications problem at DHS came out 3 years ago. A comprehensive solution is long overdue. Unfortunately, the Department has still not implemented appropriate corrective action. I commend subcommittee Ranking Member PAYNE for introducing this important legislation and for his efforts to get it enacted into law. I urge my colleagues to concur with the Senate amendment of H.R. 615.

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

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I, once again, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 615, which seeks to enhance interoperable communications at the Department of Homeland Security.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 615.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 28 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1831

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DENHAM) at 6 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Passage of H.R. 1190, and motions to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 805 and H.R. 2576.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

PROTECTING SENIORS' ACCESS TO MEDICARE ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage of the bill (H.R. 1190) to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board,