

the Longworth House Office Building to decontaminate it. Packages were sent to other locations. Twenty-two Americans were infected; 5 were killed, and here we are, 14 years later.

For over a decade, Congressman KING and I have been fighting to develop a comprehensive national strategy to counter the grave threat that weapons of mass destruction pose to our Nation.

According to the former chief medical officer and assistant secretary of the Office of Health Affairs at the Department of Homeland Security, Alexander Garza:

A successful anthrax attack could potentially expose hundreds of thousands of people, cause illness, death, panic, economic losses . . . making this a weapon of mass disruption as well as destruction.

By passing this legislation, we will expand our national response capability by administering surpluses and expiring anthrax vaccines and antimicrobials to emergency first responders on a voluntary basis.

Making expiring anthrax vaccines from the Strategic National Stockpile available to emergency first responders provides a cost-effective solution.

It is important that we pass this legislation. I want to thank all of those who made it possible to get here today; and hopefully, in a few weeks, when we get back, we will have a big WMD legislation on this floor.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers. If Miss RICE has no further speakers, I am prepared to close after she closes.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility to protect the men and women we call on to protect the public when disaster strikes. H.R. 1300 is commonsense legislation. It will provide emergency responders with anthrax vaccines from the Strategic National Stockpile that are approaching their expiration.

Certainly, our hope is that our emergency responders will never have to respond to an anthrax attack, but they deserve to know that, if that call ever does come, they can respond without fear for their own safety.

Once again, I would like to congratulate my colleagues from New York and New Jersey on this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation. Let me emphasize the bipartisan nature of it.

BILL PASCRELL has been there from the start. He referenced the anthrax attacks here in the Capitol back in 2001. None of us who was here at that time will ever, ever forget that. That should have been a wakeup call then. Unfortunately, not enough action was taken. Now, finally, after all these years, we are taking this first major step.

I want to thank BILL PASCRELL for being there. I want to thank Miss RICE for the whole tone of the debate here this afternoon.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1300, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. KING of New York. 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.

STATE WIDE INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2206) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require recipients of State Homeland Security Grant Program funding to preserve and strengthen interoperable emergency communications capabilities, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2206

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 “State Wide Interoperable Communications Enhancement Act” or the “SWIC Enhancement Act”.

SEC. 2. MINIMUM CONTENTS OF APPLICATION FOR CERTAIN HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT FUNDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 2004(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 605(b)) is amended by—

(1) redesignating subparagraphs (B) and (C) as subparagraphs (C) and (D), respectively; and

(2) inserting after subparagraph (A) the following new subparagraph:

“(B)(i) certification that the Governor of the State has designated a Statewide Interoperability Coordinator, including identification in such certification of the individual so designated, who shall be responsible for—

“(I) coordinating the daily operations of the State’s interoperability efforts;

“(II) coordinating State interoperability and communications projects and grant applications for such projects;

“(III) establishing and maintaining working groups to develop and implement key interoperability initiatives; and

“(IV) coordinating and updating, as necessary, a Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan that specifies the current status of State efforts to enhance communications interoperability within the State, including progress, modifications, or setbacks, and future goals for communications interoperability among emergency response agencies in the State; or

“(ii) if a Statewide Interoperability Coordinator has not been designated in accordance with clause (i)—

“(I) certification that the State is performing in another manner the functions described in subclauses (I) through (IV) of such clause; and

“(II) identification in such certification of an individual who has been designated by the State as the primary point of contact for performance of such functions;”.

(b) LIMITATION ON APPLICATION.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to any grant for which an application was submitted under the State Homeland Security Grant Program before the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING) and the gentlewoman from New York (Miss RICE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say at the outset, it is great to have two New Yorkers running a debate. It doesn’t happen often that we run the House; so, KATHLEEN, let’s take advantage of it while we can. Any motions you can think of we can make?

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2206, the State Wide Interoperable Communications Enhancement Act, which was introduced by the ranking member of the Committee on Homeland Security’s Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE). This bill recognizes the important role played by Statewide Interoperability Coordinators, SWICs.

We have all witnessed the communications failures during the response to the September 11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina. Interoperability is vital during disaster response.

However, despite investing more than \$5 billion in grant funding to enhance communications capability over the past 10 years, interoperability remains a challenge. To address this challenge, States have appointed SWICs to ensure emergency response providers in their States have the ability to communicate.

SWICs complete Statewide Interoperable Communications Plans, ensure grant investments are coordinated statewide, and oversee communications projects. Many SWICs also serve as the State point of contact to FirstNet for the design and construction of the Public Safety Broadband Network.

H.R. 2206 requires Governors to certify, as part of their applications for

State Homeland Security grant programs, that they have designated a person to serve as the SWIC or, if not, that the functions of a SWIC are being carried out in another manner.

The Committee on Homeland Security approved H.R. 2206 in May by a bipartisan voice vote. I urge Members to join me in supporting this bill.

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

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in strong support of H.R. 2206, the State Wide Interoperable Communications Enhancement Act.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to be here with my colleague and friend from New York. This legislation, introduced by Congressman DONALD PAYNE, will help prevent Federal grant dollars from being spent on communications equipment that will not advance the goal of interoperability.

After the September 11 attack, interoperable communications failures were identified as a factor that complicated first responders' efforts. In the immediate aftermath, Congress appropriated millions of dollars in grant funds to address national response capability gaps, including interoperable communications.

Unfortunately, millions of dollars were invested on interoperable communications equipment before State and local governments had developed the strategies, plans, and governance structures to ensure that the investments would actually advance their interoperability goals.

Nearly 10 years ago, when interoperability challenges plagued the Hurricane Katrina response, one of the major takeaways was that spending millions of dollars on the interoperability problem does not yield results unless there are mechanisms in place for coordination.

In response to that tough lesson, Congress, in 2006, authorized the creation of the Office of Emergency Communications within the Department of Homeland Security and tasked the office with developing a National Emergency Communications Plan.

The first plan, which was released in 2008, set as a milestone for every State the designation of a full-time Statewide Interoperability Coordinator. This was a major recommendation from first responders across the Nation.

States initially met the goal of appointing full-time SWICs, and we saw the benefits firsthand during the response to the Boston Marathon bombings.

In the years and months leading up to that day, the Massachusetts SWIC had engaged in significant planning activities and had coordinated with organizations at the Federal, State, and local levels to exercise the emergency communications capabilities.

As a result of the high performance of the emergency communications systems, lives were saved that day in Boston.

Due to recent budgetary pressures, however, the number of States that maintain dedicated full-time SWICs has dwindled. SWICs are charged with overseeing the daily operation of the State's interoperability efforts, coordinating interoperability and communications projects, maintaining governance structures, and implementing Statewide Communications Interoperability Plans.

H.R. 2206 seeks to maintain the governance structures and coordination activities that have helped guide interoperable communications investments since Hurricane Katrina.

Nationwide, over \$13 billion of Federal money has been spent on developing robust interoperable communications capabilities, and the goal still has not been achieved.

But we have made progress, and we cannot fall backwards by losing the governance and coordination that ensures we are making sound investments in emergency communications.

H.R. 2206 requires that States, in some way, are overseeing emergency communications investments to ensure that the systems are interoperable.

On behalf of the Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee Ranking Member PAYNE, I would like to thank full Committee Chairman MIKE MCCAUL, Ranking Member THOMPSON, and Subcommittee Chairman MCSALLY for supporting this measure and for helping to bring it to the floor today.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2206, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2206 will protect the progress we have made toward achieving nationwide interoperable emergency communications and prevent money from being wasted on investments that will not advance that goal.

SWICs play a critical role in coordinating emergency communications investments and policies at the State level, and it is important that this work continue.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Ranking Member PAYNE and Chairman MARTHA MCSALLY for their efforts on this.

I, again, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2206, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2206, the State Wide Interoperable Communications Enhancement Act, which would establish a grant program to preserve and strengthen interoperable emergency communications capabilities for local and state first responders.

The bill requires a state to include in its application for State Homeland Security Grant Program funding a certification:

That the governor of the state has designated a Statewide Interoperability Coordinator; or

Indicating that the state is performing the functions of such a Coordinator in another manner and identifying the primary point of contact for performance of such functions.

The bill would establish the role of State Interoperability Coordinator as:

Overseeing the daily operations of the state's interoperability efforts;

Coordinating state interoperability and communications projects and grant applications for such projects;

Establishing and maintaining working groups to develop and implement key interoperability initiatives; and

Implementing and updating a Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan that specifies the current status of state efforts to enhance communications interoperability within the state, including future goals for communications interoperability among emergency response agencies in the state.

The bill would formalize the role of the State Wide Interoperability Coordinator to ensure that there was a single point of contact in each state.

The bill will assist in establishing a single point of contact for Statewide interoperability for state and local first responders; Second, the legislation is necessary to create a seamless level of communication between the Department of Homeland Security and states to ensure that communications regarding terrorist attacks, natural or manmade disasters are managed appropriately.

As a senior member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, I am well aware, as are many of my colleagues, of the essential and lifesaving role of communications during a crisis.

Because the tragedy of September 11, 2001, was compounded by communication failures among the brave first responders who entered the burning towers that comprised the World Trade Center it has been an imperative of the Homeland Security Committee to address first responder communication interoperability challenges.

The number of first responders lost on that single day was the greatest loss of first responders at any single event in U.S. History: 343 New York City Fire Department firefighters; 23 New York City Police Department Officers; 37 Port Authority Police Department officers, 15 EMTs and 3 court officers were casualties of the attacks.

The need for this bill authored by Congressman PAYNE is evident.

The City of Houston covers over a 1,000 square mile region in Southeast Texas. It has a night-time population of nearly two million people, which peaks with over three million daytime inhabitants.

The city of Houston's 9-1-1 Emergency Center manages nearly 9,000 emergency calls per day. The volume of emergency calls can easily double during times of inclement weather or special City social/sporting events like Hurricanes Ike in September 2008; and Katrina as well as Rita, which occurred in September and October of 2005.

Annually, one out of every ten citizens uses EMS.

There are over 200,000 EMS incidents involving over 225,000 patients or potential patients annually. On the average, EMS responds to a citizen every 3 minutes. Each

EMS response is made by one of 88 City of Houston EMS vehicles.

In 2013, the City of Houston's fire Department lost Captain EMT Matthew Renaud, Engineer Operator EMT Robert Bebee, Firefighter EMT Robert Garner and Probationary Firefighter Anne Sullivan when they responded to a hotel fire.

Each member of the House of Representatives knows of the loss of a first responder who was going to the aid of those in harm's way. This bill will offer additional resources to the first responders of the Department of Homeland Security.

This bill will ensure that a critical communication element for our nation's first responders and the role of the Department of Homeland Security in providing them with support is addressed.

I ask my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of H.R. 2206.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2206, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1715

VETERANS ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACT OF 2015

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2499) to amend the Small Business Act to increase access to capital for veteran entrepreneurs, to help create jobs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. 4. BUSINESS LOANS PROGRAM.

(a) SECTION 7(a) FUNDING LEVELS.—The third proviso under the heading "BUSINESS LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT" under the heading "SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION" under title V of division E of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Public Law 113-235; 128 Stat. 2371) is amended by striking "\$18,750,000,000" and inserting "\$23,500,000,000".

(b) LOAN LIMITATIONS.—Section 7(a)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by striking "No financial assistance" and inserting the following:

"(i) IN GENERAL.—No financial assistance"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

"(ii) LIQUIDITY.—On and after October 1, 2015, the Administrator may not guarantee a loan under this subsection if the lender determines that the borrower is unable to obtain credit elsewhere solely because the liquidity of the lender depends upon the guaranteed portion of the loan being sold on the secondary market."; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(C) LENDING LIMITS OF LENDERS.—On and after October 1, 2015, the Administrator may not

guarantee a loan under this subsection if the sole purpose for requesting the guarantee is to allow the lender to exceed the legal lending limit of the lender."

(C) REPORTING.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

(A) the term "Administrator" means the Administrator of the Small Business Administration;

(B) the term "business loan" means a loan made or guaranteed under section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a));

(C) the term "cancellation" means that the Administrator approves a proposed business loan, but the prospective borrower determines not to take the business loan; and

(D) the term "net dollar amount of business loans" means the difference between the total dollar amount of business loans and the total dollar amount of cancellations.

(2) REQUIREMENT.—During the 3-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a quarterly report regarding the loan programs carried out under section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)), which shall include—

(A) for the fiscal year during which the report is submitted and the 3 fiscal years before such fiscal year—

(i) the weekly total dollar amount of business loans;

(ii) the weekly total dollar amount of cancellations;

(iii) the weekly net dollar amount of business loans—

(I) for all business loans; and

(II) for each category of loan amount described in clause (i), (ii), or (iii) of section 7(a)(18) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(18));

(B) for the fiscal year during which the report is submitted—

(i) the amount of remaining authority for business loans, in dollar amount and as a percentage; and

(ii) estimates of the date on which the net dollar amount of business loans will reach the maximum for such business loans based on daily net lending volume and extrapolations based on year to date net lending volume, quarterly net lending volume, and quarterly growth trends;

(C) the number of early defaults (as determined by the Administrator) during the quarter covered by the report;

(D) the total amount paid by borrowers in early default during the quarter covered by the report, as of the time of purchase of the guarantee;

(E) the number of borrowers in early default that are franchisees;

(F) the total amount of guarantees purchased by the Administrator during the quarter covered by the report; and

(G) a description of the actions the Administrator is taking to combat early defaults administratively and any legislative action the Administrator recommends to address early defaults.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) and the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their legislative remarks and include extraneous materials in the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Two weeks ago, on July 13, this Chamber overwhelmingly passed H.R. 2499. This legislation provides greater assistance to our veteran entrepreneurs by making Small Business Administration, SBA, loans more affordable for veterans.

It permanently waives the up-front fee charged by the SBA to borrowers through the agency's 7(a) Express loan program without imposing any additional costs on taxpayers.

As my colleagues are aware, the SBA's 7(a) loan guarantee program is vital for small businesses to get the capital needed for growth of the American economy. As the economic outlook begins to brighten, more small businesses than ever before are taking advantage of this program.

Despite a significant increase in demand over the past several months, Congress was not notified until June 25 that the program was dangerously close to its authorized lending authority of \$18.75 billion and might surpass it prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Such eleventh hour notification makes it difficult for Congress to act. Yet, Congress is acting swiftly to help America's small businesses, businesses that no longer could get SBA-guaranteed loans as of noon on July 23, when the SBA reached its authorized limit.

I want to thank my counterparts in the other body for working quickly to resolve this matter and offering an amendment to H.R. 2499, the veterans bill.

This amendment ensures that the SBA will have sufficient authority to guarantee loans through the end of the fiscal year. This increase comes at no cost to the taxpayer. Let me repeat that. At no cost to the taxpayer.

That is because the fees paid by the users of the program—not taxpayers—cover the costs of the program. This is a win-win situation, as this will allow banks to continue offering 7(a) loans.

Further, this amendment also ensures that, from now on, Congress will be informed on a regular basis about the status of a loan program and lending authority limits.

This will ensure that Congress can address the situation in a timelier manner and inquire of the SBA what steps it might use administratively to ameliorate a situation in which the agency might exceed its lending authorization level.

The amendment ensures that we do not repeat the experience of the previous 2 years, where Congress at the eleventh hour had to scramble for a solution because it wasn't notified by the SBA of its problem until the last minute.

This is truly a time-sensitive issue that needs to be corrected today. Between noon and 2:30 on July 23, the