

The concurrent resolution was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE PRESIDENT TO AWARD THE MEDAL OF HONOR TO JOHN L. CANLEY FOR ACTS OF VALOR DURING THE VIETNAM WAR

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4641) to authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to John L. Canley for acts of valor during the Vietnam War while a member of the Marine Corps, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4641

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

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION FOR AWARD OF MEDAL OF HONOR TO JOHN L. CANLEY FOR ACTS OF VALOR DURING THE VIETNAM WAR.

(a) WAIVER OF TIME LIMITATIONS.—Notwithstanding the time limitations specified in section 6248 of title 10, United States Code, or any other time limitation with respect to the awarding of certain medals to persons who served in the Armed Forces, the President may award the Medal of Honor under section 6241 of such title to John L. Canley for the acts of valor during the Vietnam War described in subsection (b).

(b) ACTS OF VALOR DESCRIBED.—The acts of valor referred to in subsection (a) are the actions of then Gunnery Sergeant John L. Canley during combat operations from January 31, 1968, to February 6, 1968, during the Vietnam War as a member of the Marine Corps, for which he was previously awarded the Navy Cross.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

□ 1430

SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EVIDENCE REPORTING ACT OF 2017

Mrs. HANDEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1766) to reauthorize the SAFER Act of 2013, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1766

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 “Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting Act of 2017” or the “SAFER Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. PEDIATRIC SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINERS.

Section 304(c)(2) of the DNA Sexual Assault Justice Act of 2004 (34 U.S.C. 40723(c)(2)) is amended—

(1) by inserting “, both adult and pediatric,” after “role of forensic nurses”; and

(2) by striking “and elder abuse” and inserting “elder abuse, and, in particular, the need for pediatric sexual assault nurse examiners, including such nurse examiners working in the multidisciplinary setting, in responding to abuse of both children and adolescents”.

SEC. 3. REDUCING THE RAPE KIT BACKLOG.

(a) REAUTHORIZATION.—Section 2(c)(4) of the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 (34 U.S.C. 40701(c)(4)) is amended by striking “2017” and inserting “2022”.

(b) SUNSET.—Section 1006 of the SAFER Act of 2013 (34 U.S.C. 40701 note) is amended by striking “2018” and inserting “2023”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. HANDEL) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HANDEL. Mr. 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 S. 1766, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

S. 1766, the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting Act of 2017, also known as the SAFER Act, will strengthen State and local law enforcement’s ability to reduce the number of untested rape kits and help take more offenders off our streets.

Congress provides significant resources annually to the Department of Justice to help reduce backlogs of untested forensic evidence. This legislation will reauthorize the Attorney General’s authority to allocate 5 to 7 percent of funds made available to carry out the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program to help communities audit their backlogs, which is an important first step in any effort to eliminate a backlog.

Despite the cases analyzed and improvements made with our Federal resources, backlogs persist due to the ever-increasing demand for evidence testing. According to the National Institute of Justice, as the value of DNA evidence is increasingly recognized, more evidence gets collected and submitted to laboratories for analysis.

Delays in analysis of forensic evidence often result in delays of justice: serial offenders can continue victimizing, and innocent individuals may be incarcerated. The SAFER Act helps address this common impediment to the response to rape and sexual assault at the State, local, and Tribal levels.

Importantly, the SAFER Act also would clarify that pediatric forensic nurses are eligible for training and employment grants. This provision underscores the critical role that pediatric sexual assault nurse examiners can play in a community’s response to children who are victims of abuse.

S. 1766 can help ensure that resources provided for DNA analysis are focused on grant recipients making a good faith effort to estimate and manage their backlog of untested samples and improve efforts to get sex offenders off of our streets.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 1766, the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting Act of 2017. This bipartisan legislation passed the Senate on October 23, 2017.

I am glad that this House is moving this legislation, because it is about children. It is about the scourge that children, women, and others find themselves victims of—sexual assault.

S. 1766 will reauthorize the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 through the year 2022, by amending the language in section 2(c)(4) of 34 U.S.C. 40701(c)(4).

Furthermore, this legislation also amends other sections of the DNA Sexual Assault Justice Act of 2004 by ensuring that role of forensic nurses pertains to both adult and pediatric care.

The SAFER Act also amends this statute by making a provision after “elder abuse” for the need of nurse examiners, particularly where there is the need for pediatric sexual assault nurse examiners, including such nurse examiners working in the multidisciplinary setting, in responding to abuse of both children and adolescents.

Finally, this legislation will sunset through 2023 by amending the SAFER Act. The SAFER Act is a critical program, administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, that allows:

Local law enforcement programs to obtain funding for programs to reduce the rape kit backlog in communities across the country;

Victims of sexual assault get justice more quickly than in the past;

Thirty-five percent of funds available under the Debbie Smith Act for grants to local law enforcement agencies to focus more resources on rape kit testing;

Five to seven percent of the Debbie Smith Act funding to be used by local jurisdictions to conduct 1-year audits of untested sexual assault evidence to identify serious areas of backlog; and