

## SEC. 2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT AND COLLECTION OF RAILROAD SAFETY DATA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration shall develop a plan, and a timeline to carry out such plan, to implement the recommendations from the Inspector General Report No. ST2017045 of the Department of Transportation, issued on May 3, 2017, to the greatest extent possible, to improve the Federal Railroad Administration's management and collection of railroad safety data.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit the plan and timeline developed under subsection (a) to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(2) REPORT.—The Administrator shall report annually to the committees on the implementation of such plan until implementation is complete.

## SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. CAPUANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4925.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the FRA Safety Data Improvement Act requires the Federal Railroad Administration to develop a timeline and plan to implement improvements to its safety data collection and reporting system.

Rail safety is critical to our Nation, and in order to ensure that regulations are rooted in accurate data, the FRA must make improvements to its data collection system.

Safety data is important to railroad safety, and failures of that concern us. Effective safety data collection and reporting is critical to ensuring railroad safety.

The Department of Transportation inspector general published a report outlining issues with the data collection and reporting for safety data. The report made a number of recommendations to standardizing certain procedures and implementing effective and uniform training programs. Additionally, the report recommends the FRA update its reporting guidance to clear up discrepancies in their reporting forms.

In summary, the bill requires the FRA, the Federal Railroad Administration, to implement the recommenda-

tions from the DOT Office of Inspector General report. Additionally, it requires the FRA to develop a timeline and plan to implement the guidelines and recommendations. The bill ensures the FRA addresses these discrepancies by a report requiring FRA to annually update Congress on its progress until completion.

I believe this bill will improve the safety of our railways. Rail safety is obviously critical to our Nation and our infrastructure; and to ensure that safety regulations are effective and clear, they must be updated.

I again thank Chairman SHUSTER, Chairman DENHAM, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER for working with me, as well as my colleague, Mr. CAPUANO.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, again, this is a relatively easy bill and a bipartisan bill. It simply requires that the FRA train people when they report incidents of safety, that they report them in a uniform manner so that when somebody goes to look to see how many accidents there were or a certain type of accident, they can compare apples to apples instead of apples to oranges. It is kind of simple. It is a straightforward bill and, again, it is bipartisan.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER), the author of this bill.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman SHUSTER and Ranking Member DEFAZIO for their leadership on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, working with me on a bipartisan basis on the FRA Safety Data Improvement Act. Additionally, I want to thank Congressman MITCHELL for helping colead this important bill.

In New Jersey, our rails and tunnels are literally crumbling. In a political environment, that is all too often polarized. Democrats and Republicans can certainly find common ground on our infrastructure being deficient, degrading, and incurring accidents that are becoming all too regular.

The American Society of Civil Engineers gave America a D-plus infrastructure rating on their scorecard. New Jersey also received an overall D-plus, with rail and transit in particularly bad shape.

Bergen County, in my district, is the worst in the Northeast for railway crossing crashes. America's infrastructure failure is leading to more and more accidents. In fact, recently, we have seen fatal Amtrak and New Jersey Transit crashes in Hoboken, New Jersey, Washington State, South Carolina, and West Virginia.

We simply can't afford to sit idly by, punting on this urgent need. We need infrastructure investment, but we also need to proactively improve our safety procedures and processes. We need to take on safety in this country. And for all we pay in taxes and tickets, both of

which I think are far too high, we cannot play games with the safety of our families and children. From administration to administration, we can't have inconsistencies or delays in implementing rail safety rules.

I am proud to have led on this bipartisan bill to secure America's rails with real safety provisions. The bipartisan FRA Safety Data Improvement Act improves and standardizes reporting and training around railway accidents on railroads like Amtrak and New Jersey Transit. By better standardizing reporting requirements, we can leverage big datasets to improve safety and make smarter decisions. It does so my implementing the DOT's inspector general report and ensuring reporting to Congress on compliance.

The IG found that the Federal Railroad Administration had taken some steps to improve data reporting, but it still lacks standardized reporting and training. This bill codifies steps suggested by the IG, providing more certainty in the safety of our rails.

By allowing us to better leverage bill datasets—and the key here is putting big data to work—this bill will save lives. I urge support and passage of the FRA Safety Data Improvement Act.

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

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, this bill and the previous one we discussed reflect the bipartisan commitment to our Nation's infrastructure and to a safe infrastructure. I appreciate my colleagues' support in working jointly in bringing these bills forward. I urge my colleagues to join all of us in supporting this legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4925.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## SUPPORTING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENCOURAGING INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE IN ETHIOPIA

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 128) supporting respect for human rights and encouraging inclusive governance in Ethiopia, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

### H. RES. 128

Whereas the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has been an important partner of the United States and a regional leader in promoting economic growth, global health, and peace and security;

Whereas Ethiopia has helped advance the national interests of the United States and regional partners, including through contributions to international peacekeeping, combating radical Islamist extremism and other forms of terrorism, and regional cooperation through the African Union;

Whereas Ethiopia has made great strides in addressing significant challenges in global health, child survival, and food security;

Whereas Ethiopia's transition from authoritarian rule to participatory democracy has not kept pace with other reforms;

Whereas the ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) claimed to win 99.6 percent of the vote in elections that were deemed neither free nor fair in 2010 and all 546 parliamentary seats in 2015, thereby further consolidating the EPRDF's single party rule;

Whereas the Charities and Societies Proclamation and Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, both enacted in 2009, have accelerated the contraction of democratic space, severely limited the practice of fundamental human rights, enabled abuses by security forces, and impeded efforts to promote accountability for such abuses in Ethiopia;

Whereas government forces launched a violent crackdown on protests by ethnic Oromo and Amhara over their perceived marginalization in 2015, resulting in hundreds of deaths and tens of thousands of arrests;

Whereas the Government of Ethiopia has recently released hundreds of political prisoners, but has continued to periodically detain government critics and opposition figures;

Whereas the Government of Ethiopia has periodically imposed a state of emergency that even further restricts freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, including through blockage of mobile internet access and social media communication;

Whereas the 2017 Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Ethiopia cited serious human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, killings, and torture committed by security forces, restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of association, politically motivated trials, harassment, and intimidation of opposition members and journalists; and

Whereas these persistent human rights abuses, including state-sponsored violence against civilians in the Oromia, Amhara, and Somali regions of Ethiopia, as well as the abuse of laws to stifle journalistic freedoms, stand in direct contrast to democratic principles, violate the Constitution of Ethiopia, and undermine Ethiopia's position as a regional leader for economic growth, peace, and security; Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes and commends Ethiopia's efforts to promote regional peace and security, including through the contribution of peacekeeping forces to regional and United Nations peacekeeping operations;

(2) recognizes the importance of continued United States and Ethiopian partnership in combating terrorism, promoting economic growth and opportunity, and addressing global health challenges;

(3) notes with deep concern persistent reports of widespread human rights abuses and the contraction of democratic space in Ethiopia, which may threaten stability and reverse economic progress over the long term;

(4) condemns the use of excessive force by Ethiopian security forces, including the killing of unarmed protesters, and the wrongful arrest and detention of journalists, students, activists, and political leaders exercising their constitutional rights to freedom of assembly, association, and expression;

(5) recognizes and commends the recent peaceful and voluntary transfer of authority from Prime Minister Hailemariam to new Prime Minister Abiy and welcomes Prime Minister Abiy's inaugural speech calling for open political competition and the defense of fundamental human rights;

(6) calls on the Government of Ethiopia to—

(A) lift the state of emergency;

(B) repeal or amend proclamations used as a tool to suppress human rights in Ethiopia, including the Charities and Societies Proclamation and Anti-Terrorism Proclamation of 2009, and respect the rights of Ethiopian citizens to freedom of assembly and expression, in keeping with Articles 30 and 29 of the Ethiopian Constitution;

(C) end the use of excessive force by Ethiopian security forces and hold accountable those responsible for killing, torturing, or otherwise abusing the human rights of civilians exercising their constitutional rights through fair and public trials;

(D) release all activists, journalists, and opposition figures who have been wrongfully imprisoned for exercising their constitutional rights, including those arrested for reporting about public protests;

(E) improve transparency around development policies and activities that may infringe upon the human rights of local communities; and

(F) allow for an independent examination of the state of human rights in Ethiopia by a rapporteur appointed by the United Nations;

(7) urges protesters in Ethiopia to refrain from the use or incitement of violence in demonstrations;

(8) urges opposition groups and the Government of Ethiopia to directly engage in peaceful discussions to air grievances and broaden political discourse;

(9) calls on the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development—

(A) to engage in a cooperative effort with the Government of Ethiopia in the formulation of a comprehensive strategy, in coordination with other donors, to help advance democracy, rule of law, human rights, economic growth, and peace and security in Ethiopia;

(B) continue to strengthen ties with Ethiopia, including through the provision of appropriate levels and forms of security assistance, in correlation to the Ethiopian Government's own demonstrated commitment to democracy, rule of law, human rights, economic growth, and peace and security in the region;

(C) condemn human rights abuses and the excessive use of force by Ethiopian security forces while pressing for the release of individuals wrongfully detained; and

(D) hold accountable individuals responsible for gross human rights violations in Ethiopia through appropriate mechanisms, which may include the imposition of targeted sanctions pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (Public Law 114-328); and

(10) stands by the people of Ethiopia and supports their peaceful efforts to increase democratic space and to exercise the rights guaranteed by the Ethiopian Constitution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KEATING) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that

all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 128, bipartisan legislation—we got about 114 Members, maybe as many as 118, a few came in right at the end—is a visible and necessary manifestation of deep congressional concern that egregious human rights abuses immediately end in Ethiopia and that fundamental human rights be promoted and protected for all.

I would note parenthetically that, like others in this House, my commitment to promoting human rights in Ethiopia spans decades and includes country visits, chairing numerous congressional hearings and legislation, including the Ethiopia Freedom, Democracy, and Human Rights Advancement Act of 2006.

The resolution before us today, Mr. Speaker, is balanced and recognizes the recent peaceful and voluntary transfer of power from Prime Minister Hailemariam to the new Prime Minister Abiy, and welcomes Prime Minister Abiy's inaugural speech calling for open political competition and the defense of fundamental human rights. However, Prime Minister Abiy has been a member of the governing Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front since the EPRDF took power in 1991.

Prior to becoming Prime Minister, he played a critical role in the government security apparatus as the co-founder of the Ethiopian Information Network Security Agency. He is the leader of the Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organization, one of the four ethnic groups that make up the EPRDF.

Also, H. Res. 128 commends Ethiopia's efforts to promote regional peace and security, as well as our longstanding partnership in addressing health challenges.

□ 1715

However, the resolution carefully and accurately highlights that, despite these developments, human rights abuses remain at the core of the government's treatment—or should I say mistreatment—of the Ethiopian people.

So after decades of serious human rights abuse—often ignored and trivialized by some in Africa, the European Union, and the United States—it is now time for positive action and meaningful deeds. Words, Mr. Speaker, are just not enough.

In a letter asking Members of Congress to support our resolution, Amnesty International notes that, in the last 2 months, the government has released large numbers of political prisoners—although many remain behind

bars—and closed the notorious Maekelawi prison, known for its torture. Yet some have already been rearrested, and all—absolutely all of them—are at risk of rearrest. Making matters worse, repressive laws and state of emergency, used to brutalize people, remains in place. There has been no reform there. None whatsoever.

Human Rights Watch strongly supports H. Res. 128 and has reported in its reporting on human rights that: “Since late 2015, security forces have killed over 1,000 people”—and some estimates put that far higher—“and detained tens of thousands during widespread protests against government policies.”

The Human Rights Watch goes on to say: “A state of emergency began in February 2018”—that is just several weeks ago—“the second in 2 years, and permits draconian restrictions on rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly. Authorities regularly use arbitrary arrests and politically motivated prosecutions to silence journalists, activists, and perceived opposition party members. Torture remains a serious problem in detention.”

Earlier today, MIKE COFFMAN and I had a press conference. There were several men and women there who have suffered the torture of the Ethiopian Government and bear on their bodies and their minds and their hearts the horrible and horrific indignity of the use of torture by the Government of Ethiopia. Human Rights Watch continues: “The Ethiopian Government has not conducted meaningful investigations into any of these abuses. Repressive laws restrict the activities of nongovernmental organizations. The ruling coalition won all 547 parliamentary seats in the 2015 election.”

All of them. What does that tell you?

Mr. Speaker, the 2017 Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Ethiopia also cited serious human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, killings, and torture committed by the security forces, restrictions on freedom of expression and association, politically motivated trials, harassment, and intimidation of opposition members and journalists.

On February 18 of this year, the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia issued a strong statement against the state of emergency. They said, in pertinent part: “We strongly disagree with the Ethiopian Government’s decision to impose a state of emergency that includes restrictions on fundamental rights such as assembly and expression.”

“We strongly urge the government to rethink this approach”—the State Department goes on to say—“and identify other means to protect lives and property while preserving, and indeed expanding, the space for meaningful dialogue and political participation. . . .”

My resolution—cosponsored by well over 110, I think it is 118 now, Members of the House—calls on the Government of Ethiopia to:

Lift the state of emergency;

Repeal or amend proclamations used as a tool to suppress human rights in Ethiopia, including the so-called Anti-terrorism Proclamation—which accuses any Ethiopian who criticizes the government of being a terrorist—and the Charities and Societies Proclamation—which makes it virtually impossible for civil society organizations to function by severely restricting foreign funding;

We are asking in the resolution to stop the killing of peaceful protestors and hold accountable those responsible for killing, torturing, and detaining innocent civilians;

Release dissidents, journalists, students, activists, and political leaders jailed for exercising their right to free expression and peaceful assembly;

Engage with citizens about development strategies, especially when these people could lose their land;

Allow a U.N. rapporteur unfettered access to examine the state of human rights in Ethiopia. Unfettered. Go anywhere, any time, and talk to anyone without fear of reprisal or retaliation;

And the resolution calls on the U.S. Department of State and USAID to, among other things, engage in a cooperative effort with the Government of Ethiopia in the formulation of a comprehensive strategy to help advance democracy, rule of law, human rights, economic growth, and peace and security in Ethiopia, and hold accountable individuals responsible for gross human rights violations in Ethiopia through appropriate mechanisms like the Global Magnitsky Act.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by thanking Congressman MIKE COFFMAN, who has been an amazing tenacious supporter for this legislation and has really made a difference in helping to get it to the floor, and, of course, our majority leader for actually getting it to the floor. I see many of my colleagues on the Democrat side. I thank them. This is bipartisan legislation, and that is what it ought to be.

I want to thank Ms. BASS, the ranking member of the Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee, for her cosponsorship and leadership as well, as well as Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL.

I would also like to thank the many human rights groups and the Ethiopian-American community, who have and continue to work diligently and tenaciously to secure fundamental human rights for the people of Ethiopia.

This is a first step today. My hope is that it will begin a process of this body being absolutely in solidarity with the oppressed and standing in opposition to the oppressor.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution.

I would like to begin by thanking Representative SMITH for sponsoring H. Res. 128, which expresses support for human rights and encourages inclusive governance in Ethiopia. I am a cosponsor of this resolution, along with over 100 of my colleagues—a testimony to the work Mr. SMITH has put into this effort.

This resolution acknowledges the partnership between the United States and the Ethiopian Government. We have partnered together on many issues in the world: economic issues, global health issues, and security issues. Indeed, the Ethiopian military benefits from the U.S. counterterrorism and peacekeeping support programs that we work with them on. However, it also expresses concern at the unrest in the Oromo, Amhara, and Somali regions since 2015 and the human rights violations perpetrated against largely peaceful protestors.

With the recent election of Prime Minister Abiy last month, Ethiopia now has an opportunity to emerge from this crisis to undertake the reforms called for in this resolution, including lifting the repressive state of emergency, repealing or amending proclamations used to suppress human rights, holding accountable those responsible for human rights violations, and releasing all remaining political prisoners.

As the ranking member of the Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Subcommittee on the Foreign Affairs Committee, we have done a lot of work in that subcommittee around the importance of the rule of law and of legitimate, accountable governance in making sure communities are secure and more resilient to destabilizing influences from criminal and terrorist networks.

This is not just an issue for us on the international front. I am also a member of the Homeland Security Committee, and this is an important issue in terms of our safety and security here at home.

Prison sentences for peaceful protest, restrictions on freedom of the press, and broad enforcement actions against civil society organizations is a recipe for instability—instability that impedes economic growth and leaves countries and communities vulnerable to security and other threats, both globally and, as I said, back here at home.

When a society witnesses the arrest of over 22,000 persons and the closing of over 200 NGOs, we should expect to see the trust between communities and their government suffer as a result. Instead, the government should work towards promoting this trust that is so critical to the right of Ethiopians to live freely and safely at home, as well as to their government’s strength as a partner with the United States and others around the world.

In light of recent events in Ethiopia, it is important to view Prime Minister Abiy’s election not as the end of the

crisis, but as a new beginning for social and political reform in Ethiopia. I hope he will undertake this challenge and undertake these vital reforms.

In the spirit of a new beginning, I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), the original sponsor of the resolution, and, like I said, a giant when it has come to pushing human rights in Ethiopia.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, today, the United States House of Representatives will have an opportunity to vote on H. Res. 128, Supporting Respect for Human Rights and Encouraging Inclusive Governance in Ethiopia.

H. Res. 128 calls upon the Government of Ethiopia to take clear and decisive steps toward becoming more inclusive, more democratic, and more respectful of the basic human rights of its people.

There will be those who will argue today that this resolution is counterproductive in that the Government of Ethiopia has been a strong and dependable ally of the United States of America.

The opponents will say that the national security interest of the United States justifies our support for this government, and, therefore, we must ignore the cries of the Ethiopian people who are suffering under this repressive regime.

The opponents fear that the Ethiopian Government will end its cooperation with the United States in the war against terrorism if we publicly criticize their human rights record by passing this resolution.

But I say to them, for far too long, the United States has looked the other way as the Ethiopian Government has so often used the weapons that we have provided for them, not to fight terrorism, but to terrorize their own people.

For far too long, the United States has looked the other way as peaceful protestors were met with violence from heavily armed Ethiopian security forces.

And, for far too long, the United States has looked the other way as journalists, political opposition leaders, and anyone who dared question this government were rounded up and shipped off to detention camps.

The U.S.-backed government in Ethiopia has lost its legitimacy to govern and rules by brute force and intimidation.

To the opponents of H. Res. 128, the passage of this resolution will mark a setback for the relationship between the United States and Ethiopia.

But it is my hope that the passage of H. Res. 128, Supporting Respect for

Human Rights and Encouraging Inclusive Governance in Ethiopia, will mark a new beginning in the history of the U.S.-Ethiopian relationship where the United States will never again have to look the other way, and Ethiopia will realize its full potential by embracing all of its citizens and becoming the great Nation that it has always been destined to be.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to support H. Res. 128.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS), the ranking member of the Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 128, Supporting Respect for Human Rights and Encouraging Inclusive Governance in Ethiopia, and I want to thank our committee chair, Mr. SMITH, for his many years of effort in this direction.

□ 1730

The resolution calls on the government of Ethiopia to take clear, decisive steps towards becoming more inclusive, more democratic, and more respectful of the basic human rights of its citizens.

Ethiopia is an important partner of the U.S. in many arenas, including regional security, especially through its contributions to international peacekeeping.

Over the past few years, Ethiopia has made significant strides in addressing poverty and expanding economic development. The country has also addressed significant challenges in global health and food security. These are extremely important gains.

We are here today, however, because the country continues to have a way to go, especially in the arenas of inclusive governance and respect for human rights.

Since November 2015, there have been ongoing protests in Ethiopia's largest region of Oromia. These protests expanded to the Amhara region in August 2016. In response, security forces have used live ammunition to disperse largely peaceful protests, killing hundreds and arresting tens of thousands.

Activists, journalists, and others have also faced repeated arrests.

The Ethiopian Government has responded by imposing a state of emergency that included curfews and restrictions on the assembly, expression, and movement of its citizens. Meanwhile, earlier this year, the government began releasing prisoners, including opposition leaders, journalists, and protesters. The government also focused on an infamous detention center. Of course, this is a step in the right direction.

We are also encouraged by the recent transfer of power. The new prime minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed, recently delivered a speech where he highlighted that the government plans to address

unity and national reconciliation as well as good governance based on the rule of law. It also seeks to crack down on corruption.

Again, this is encouraging and it could be an important turning point for the country that could provide an opportunity to widen the political space, but what remains concerning, however, is that Ethiopia is still under a state of emergency, and just last month, the defense minister announced the arrest of a number of individuals who they say were linked to protests.

We encourage the Government of Ethiopia to keep the positive momentum going by lifting the state of emergency, ensuring freedom of expression and assembly, and opening up democratic space.

The current challenges facing Ethiopia are best addressed through inclusive discourse and political processes rather than through the imposition of restrictions.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore encourage Members to vote in favor of this resolution that supports respect for human rights and encourages inclusive governance in Ethiopia.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN), one of the cosponsors of this legislation.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also thank Chairman SMITH, along with his bipartisan colleagues, in joining together in authoring this legislation and bringing this bipartisan legislation forward and speaking in support of and respect of human rights in Ethiopia.

This legislation takes a very important first step for what needs to be identified and moved forward in terms of identifying what has been happening for too long, where the Ethiopian Government has been persecuting the Oromo, Ethiopia's largest minority and ethnic group.

Peaceful protests, led largely by Oromo's youth, have been met with government repression. Hundreds have been killed and thousands more have been injured. Now, most of those have also been arrested and detained by Ethiopia's security forces.

Estimates are that hundreds of thousands of Oromians have been uprooted from their homes and forced to flee the persecution and the violence. There is no doubt that Ethiopia is a very important U.S. ally, but that does not mean that we should turn a blind eye as it oppresses its people.

Now, in my State of Minnesota, we are home to the largest community of Oromians outside of Ethiopia. They are valued members of our community and we are very fortunate to have them.

I joined many Ethiopians and Oromians actually this past Sunday night when I attended a very large and moving interfaith rally with members of the African and Jewish community, and they were all together reaffirming

their commitment to religious freedom, to diversity, and to justice. Sadly, many Oromians today won't find these ideals in their home country of Ethiopia.

Mr. Speaker, today the House can speak with a solid, strong voice to support human rights and also condemn the killing of innocent protesters and the arrest and detention of journalists and students and political leaders.

We are also at the same time urging through this resolution that the protesters also refrain from violence, and also urge the Ethiopian Government to take very concrete steps to end its persecution and oppressive conduct.

Today we have an opportunity to take these important steps in showing our solidarity with the Oromians, and I hope my colleagues will join in support of this resolution.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON), who is an original cosponsor of this legislation.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I also thank Chairman SMITH and the ranking member for standing together on this important House Resolution 128.

It is true that Minnesota is home to a large number of people who find their roots in Ethiopia and are of the Oromo background.

These Minnesotans have made it very clear by reaching out to their elected representatives that while their feet are firmly planted on American soil, they still, like so many other Americans, have a heart and a sentiment where they want to support justice in the homeland that they came from. As a result, I have been able to get an education from my constituents about circumstances in Ethiopia which make this resolution necessary.

So I do rise in support of House Resolution 128, which calls on the Government of Ethiopia to make clear, concrete steps toward becoming inclusive, more democratic, more respectful of human rights of all of its citizens.

I would like to note that this is a bipartisan resolution, proving that we can come together for critical issues like human rights in Ethiopia for Americans who find their roots in Ethiopia and for people all over the world.

In Minnesota, as I noted, we are fortunate to be home to one of the largest Oromo and Ogaden communities in North America, and it is because of the relentless work of these folks that these issues have come to light. I thank them. Many of them are here today. They have been working on this issue for many years, Mr. Speaker, because it is that vitally important.

Now, as my colleagues have noted, Ethiopia is an important ally of the United States, that is a fact, but even allies must be held accountable when they violate the human rights of their people. Status as an ally is not a license to abuse human rights.

The Ethiopian people desperately need their government to take action

to secure their human rights and expand inclusive democracy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Minnesota an additional 2 minutes.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, the Ethiopian Government continues to detain journalists, bloggers, students, and political opposition leaders. Thousands remain in prison to this day.

In addition, the Ethiopian Government admits to killing over 500 of its citizens during the protests in an effort to suppress the people's freedom of speech. Most observers put this number far higher.

These abuses have created a serious instability in the country. While there have been some signs of progress, which must be noted, including the recent election of a prime minister from the Oromo region, we must continue to push for real, concrete changes. For example, the government should let the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights travel through the country to conduct an independent assessment of the human rights situation in the country.

By passing this resolution, Congress will be making clear that we will not remain silent on this important issue, we will stand together across the political divide in support of these human rights in Ethiopia.

By passing this resolution, we will speed up democratic change in Ethiopia.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on this important resolution.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, I will note that Chairman ROYCE has been a big factor in moving this forward, and when I give thanks to Mr. SMITH and over 100 more colleagues, I want to make sure that Chairman ROYCE is a person that is highlighted for his great efforts.

We are going to miss him, as he has decided not to seek reelection. He has been a person that has shown great ability to be a bipartisan leader on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and I have enjoyed working with him on this issue and many other issues.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution seeks to support Ethiopia's political transition as it hopefully moves beyond a state of emergency towards greater civil liberties under a new prime minister.

This resolution also supports the Ethiopian people and their aspirations to live in a more democratic system in which government respects fundamental freedoms.

We have partnered with Ethiopia on so many important issues, issues important to their own security, their own health, their own global welfare, and we also recognize the value in that

partnership in dealing with the security issues and the ideals and values that the United States has as a country.

This resolution strongly urges them to take that other step, to expand that partnership beyond those issues into a partnership of democracy where there will be rule of law, freedom of the press, where opposition people will not be endangered in terms of their safety, will not be imprisoned.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H. Res. 128, and I urge my colleagues to go forward.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to close.

Mr. Speaker, I include these letters of support in the RECORD. I call attention to the membership an excellent letter written by human rights and diaspora groups, six groups in all. It is entitled, "Ethiopia: Joint Letter About U.S. House Resolution 128", in support of it. They make a number of very important points.

#### ETHIOPIA: JOINT LETTER ABOUT US HOUSE RESOLUTION 128

DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIASPORA GROUPS URGE CONGRESS TO PASS H. RES. 128 ON ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia is at a crossroads. On Monday, April 2, a new Prime Minister, selected from within the ruling coalition, delivered a speech about planned reforms while the country was under another State of Emergency. At such a juncture, amid mounting pressures, the role of the US, Ethiopia's longstanding international ally to encourage critically-needed reforms and human rights protections, should not be underestimated in urging the country toward a new era of stability.

The undersigned human rights and diaspora groups fully support the passage of House Resolution 128 for the positive contribution it can make toward respecting basic human rights and encouraging inclusive governance in Ethiopia. The resolution has strong bipartisan support and more than 100 co-sponsors. In addition, H. Res. 128 has significant grassroots support among constituents across the US who have ties to Ethiopia. It calls on the government of Ethiopia to open up civic space, ensure accountability for human rights abuses and promote inclusive governance.

For the past three years, Ethiopia has faced largely peaceful and sustained protests in the Oromia and Amhara regions of the country. These protests were led by youth seeking opportunity, political reform and more participatory development strategies. The government responded with excessive force. More than a thousand protesters have been killed by Ethiopian security forces, a greater number injured, tens of thousands imprisoned and many tortured for expressing grievances. Over a million, mostly from Oromia, were uprooted due to government-instigated conflict in the Eastern part of the country.

However, a combination of forces has accumulated in support of the protesters—diaspora groups and international human rights organizations helped publicize the protest movement in Ethiopia and the government's violent response; the US Congress rallied behind H. Res. 128; international news outlets gave frequent coverage of the protests. At

the dawn of this new year, the EPRDF coalition announced reforms and some changes began to occur. Close to 7000 political prisoners were released in January and February of 2018. Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn stepped down within days, and Dr. Abiy Ahmed, a man with ties to the region most impacted by the protests, was put forward by the coalition as Ethiopia's newest prime minister.

In light of these beginnings, now more than ever, it is imperative that the United States Congress take a stand that reiterates the need for Ethiopia to take further steps in a democratic direction by passing H. Res. 128. Ethiopia's previous transfers of power indicate that leadership change is often followed by unfulfilled promises, a culling of opponents and power consolidation. If Prime Minister Abiy is truly committed to breaking that pattern, this resolution will encourage Ethiopia to lift the State of Emergency, ensuring freedoms of expression and assembly and opening up democratic space, all prerequisites for political and economic reform.

1) H. Res. 128 is a signal of support for the youth in the country who have organized to peacefully demand justice and democracy and have paid a terrible price in terms of loss of life, injury and arbitrary detention. Accountability for the human rights violations that have occurred over the last 3 years will be an essential step towards genuine reconciliation and is a key demand from the protesters.

2) H. Res. 128 contains clauses that could strengthen the hand of the Prime Minister vis-a-vis less responsive segments within the EPRDF party coalition structure, requiring negotiation with the forces that control the country's security apparatus, intelligence and the economic sectors.

3) H. Res. 128 contains clauses that call on the State Department and USAID to develop a comprehensive strategy to support improved democracy and governance in Ethiopia.

4) H. Res. 128 contains clauses that call on the Secretary of State and Secretary of Treasury to apply appropriate sanctions on individuals and organizations responsible for gross human rights.

We support passage of H. Res. 128 as a means to send a strong, unambiguous signal that the United States Congress requires concrete reforms. Such reforms are needed to create a path toward improved respect and protection of human and civil rights, political stability and sustainable regional security.

We urge members of the House to pass the resolution.

AMHARA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA.  
COALITION OF OROMOS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY.  
ETHIOPIAN ADVOCACY NETWORK.  
ETHIOPIAN HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT.  
HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH.  
OROMO ADVOCACY ALLIANCE.

—  
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL,  
Washington, DC, April 9, 2018.

Re Amnesty International USA ("AIUSA") urges the House to vote yes on H. Res. 128 which will be on the House floor on April 10.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of AIUSA and our two million members and supporters nationwide, we are writing to urge you to vote YES for H. Res. 128, supporting respect for human rights and encouraging inclusive governance in Ethiopia.

H. Res. 128 outlines key benchmarks for critically needed human rights reform in

Ethiopia and calls for a review of U.S. policy toward Ethiopia to prioritize human rights and good governance.

H. Res. 128 was approved by Voice Vote by the House Foreign Affairs Committee in July 2017 and has strong bipartisan support with 108 cosponsors including 29 Republicans and 79 Democrats.

Following highly contested elections in 2005 the Ethiopian government imposed a web of laws criminalizing any form of dissent or questioning of government policies. These laws have empowered authorities to engage in widespread surveillance, and have resulted in the arrest and detention of members of civil society.

For the past three years the Ethiopian people have been subjected to brutal repression by the security forces in response to protests against the increasingly autocratic rule of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front ("EPRDF"). Over 1000 people have been killed since 2015 and according to the Ethiopian government's own admission, 10,000 people were arrested during the first state of emergency between 2016 and 2017. Amnesty International believes that the figure is above 25,000. The current human rights crisis is the result of years of repression by security forces using sweeping legislation criminalizing dissent, the arrest of civil society leaders and journalists, and brutal crackdowns leading to scores of extrajudicial executions, massacres and the destruction of property and livelihoods. The Ethiopian government has created a culture of impunity and a climate of fear.

Ethiopia is currently under its second State of Emergency since 2016. Amnesty International has documented unlawful killings, forced displacement, arbitrary arrests, detentions, as well as torture and the ill-treatment of detainees.

In the last two months there have been some positive developments in Ethiopia: a new prime minister has been appointed, the government released a large number of political prisoners and closed the notorious Maelawli Prison known for torture. However, many more prisoners remain behind bars. While the country's web of repressive legislation remains in place and the state of emergency is in effect, all those individuals who have been released remain at risk of re-arrest. Indeed, some of them have been re-arrested. At the same time protests are continuing and are being met with brutal force by government authorities.

H. Res. 128 is a direct appeal to the Ethiopian authorities to listen to their people, change course, and uphold human rights and the rule of law.

H. Res. 128 calls on the US Secretary of State to:

Conduct a review of security assistance to Ethiopia to improve transparency with respect to the purposes of such assistance to the people of Ethiopia and,

Work with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, to improve oversight and accountability of U.S. assistance to Ethiopia, pursuant to the expectations established in the U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa.

H. Res. 128 call on the Ethiopian government to lift the state of emergency and end the use of excessive force by security forces. The resolution calls the government to conduct a credible, transparent investigation into human rights violations committed during the last three years, in an expedient manner and for those responsible for the killing, torture, and detention of innocent civilians who exercised their constitutional rights to be held accountable.

H. Res. 128 call on the Ethiopian government to take steps to restore the respect and protection of human rights and enforce ac-

countability as provided under the Ethiopian Constitution including the

Release dissidents, activists, and journalists who have been imprisoned; respect freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of the press and media;

Repeal of laws that

(i) can be used as a tool to harass or prohibit funding for civil society organizations that investigate human rights violations, engage in peaceful political dissent, or advocate for greater political freedoms.

(ii) prohibit or limit those displaced from their land from seeking remedy or redress in courts,

(iii) restrict access to justice for displaced persons

(iv) prohibit or otherwise limit peaceful nonprofit operations in Ethiopia.

H. Res. 128 urges the Ethiopian government to cooperate with a rapporteur appointed by the United Nations to conduct an independent examination of the state of human rights in Ethiopia.

Ethiopia has engaged in a number of ambitious large-scale development projects that have displaced hundreds of thousands of villagers. A key trigger of the three years of protest was the proposed expansion of the capital Addis Ababa on lands occupied by members of the Oromo community. H. Res. 128 call upon the Ethiopian government to engage in open and transparent consultations with citizens regarding its development plans, especially those strategies that could result in the displacement of people from their land and address the grievances brought forward by representatives of registered opposition parties.

Finally, H. Res. 128 reiterates Congress' support for the people of Ethiopia and their peaceful efforts to exercise the rights guaranteed by the Ethiopian constitution.

Amnesty International USA urges you to vote YES on H. Res. 128 and for the full House to pass this important resolution.

For more information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

ADOTEI AKWEI,  
Africa Advocacy Director.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. For the past 3 years, they point out, as we know, Ethiopia has faced largely peaceful and sustained protesters in the Oromia and Amhara regions of the country. They were led by youth seeking opportunity, political reform, and more participatory development strategies. The government responded with excessive force. More than 1,000 protesters have been killed by the Ethiopian security forces, a greater number injured, tens of thousands imprisoned, and many more tortured for expressing grievances. Over 1 million have been displaced.

Let me just say in conclusion that they talk about the importance of supporting this. Yes, there is a new prime minister, but as they point out in their statement, and it is so true, Ethiopia's previous transfers of power indicate that leadership change is often followed by unfulfilled promises, a culling of opponents, and power consolidation. That can't happen again.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution, I think, deserves the support of every single Member.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 128 Supporting Respect for Human Rights and Encouraging Inclusive Governance in Ethiopia.



This resolution condemns the killing of peaceful protestors by the Ethiopian security forces and calls upon the government of Ethiopia to hold accountable those responsible for killing, torturing, and detaining innocent civilians who are exercising their constitutional rights.

Passing H. Res. 128 brings attention to the stifling of political and civil dissent and journalistic freedoms committed by the Ethiopian government.

Mr. Speaker, as co-sponsor of this resolution, we recognize that the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has been an ally of the United States and the preservation of basic constitutional rights in this country is the bedrock of any democracy.

Protestors in Ethiopia are urged to refrain from violent demonstrations and encouraged to engage in peaceful negotiations.

However, the responsibility lies upon the government to implement democratic principles and respect the right to peaceful assembly and guarantee freedom of the press.

Since protests started in Oromia in 2015, the Ethiopian government has charged more than 150 students, opposition leaders, and activists at the Federal High Court under the 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation (ATP).

They have repeatedly abused such laws to limit the freedom of the press, silence independent journalists, and persecute members of the political opposition.

Ethiopian Human Rights Commission reported 669 deaths by April 2017 and Human Rights Watch subsequently reported that the Ethiopian security forces had killed between 500 and 800 peaceful protestors in the Oromia and Amhara regions by November 2016, and the number is likely higher.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Res. 128 to show their support and compassion for the people suffering as victims of human rights violations at the hands of their government.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 128, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

□ 1745

#### END BANKING FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKERS ACT OF 2018

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2219) to increase the role of the financial industry in combating human trafficking, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.  
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2219

*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 “End Banking for Human Traffickers Act of 2018”.

#### SEC. 2. INCREASING THE ROLE OF THE FINANCIAL INDUSTRY IN COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

(a) TREASURY AS A MEMBER OF THE PRESIDENT’S INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING.—Section 105(b) of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(b)) is amended by inserting “the Secretary of the Treasury,” after “the Secretary of Education.”.

(b) REQUIRED REVIEW OF PROCEDURES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Financial Institutions Examination Council, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, the private sector, and appropriate law enforcement agencies, shall—

(1) review and enhance training and examinations procedures to improve the capabilities of anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism programs to detect financial transactions relating to severe forms of trafficking in persons;

(2) review and enhance procedures for referring potential cases relating to severe forms of trafficking in persons to the appropriate law enforcement agency; and

(3) determine, as appropriate, whether requirements for financial institutions are sufficient to detect and deter money laundering relating to severe forms of trafficking in persons.

(c) INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS TARGETING MONEY LAUNDERING RELATED TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking shall submit to the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate, and the head of each appropriate Federal banking agency—

(A) an analysis of anti-money laundering efforts of the United States Government and United States financial institutions relating to severe forms of trafficking in persons; and

(B) appropriate legislative, administrative, and other recommendations to strengthen efforts against money laundering relating to severe forms of trafficking in persons.

(2) REQUIRED RECOMMENDATIONS.—The recommendations under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) feedback from financial institutions on best practices of successful programs to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons currently in place that may be suitable for broader adoption by similarly situated financial institutions;

(B) feedback from stakeholders, including victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons and financial institutions, on policy proposals derived from the analysis conducted by the task force referred to in paragraph (1) that would enhance the efforts and programs of financial institutions to detect and deter money laundering relating to severe forms of trafficking in persons, including any recommended changes to internal policies, procedures, and controls relating to severe forms of trafficking in persons;

(C) any recommended changes to training programs at financial institutions to better

equip employees to deter and detect money laundering relating to severe forms of trafficking in persons;

(D) any recommended changes to expand information sharing relating to severe forms of trafficking in persons among financial institutions and between such financial institutions, appropriate law enforcement agencies, and appropriate Federal agencies; and

(E) recommended changes, if necessary, to existing statutory law to more effectively detect and deter money laundering relating to severe forms of trafficking in persons, where such money laundering involves the use of emerging technologies and virtual currencies.

(d) LIMITATION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to grant rulemaking authority to the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section—

(1) the term “appropriate Federal banking agency” has the meaning given the term in section 3(q) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813(q));

(2) the term “severe forms of trafficking in persons” has the meaning given such term in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102);

(3) the term “Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking” means the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking established by the President pursuant to section 105 of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103); and

(4) the term “law enforcement agency” means an agency of the United States, a State, or a political subdivision of a State, authorized by law or by a government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal or civil law.

#### SEC. 3. COORDINATION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ISSUES BY THE OFFICE OF TERRORISM AND FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE.

(a) FUNCTIONS.—Section 312(a)(4) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (E), (F), and (G) as subparagraphs (F), (G), and (H), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (D) the following:

“(E) combating illicit financing relating to severe forms of trafficking in persons;”.

(b) INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—Section 312(a) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(8) INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—The Secretary of the Treasury, after consultation with the Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes, shall designate an office within the OTFI that shall coordinate efforts to combat the illicit financing of severe forms of trafficking in persons with—

“(A) other offices of the Department of the Treasury;

“(B) other Federal agencies, including—

“(i) the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons of the Department of State; and

“(ii) the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking;

“(C) State and local law enforcement agencies; and

“(D) foreign governments.”.

(c) DEFINITION.—Section 312(a) of title 31, United States Code, as amended by this section, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(9) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ‘severe forms of trafficking in persons’ has the meaning given such term in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).”.