

Mr. Speaker, first off, I would like to say, as the chairman mentioned in the previous resolution that we discussed, Mr. ROYCE is leaving us at the end of this term, and I would like to thank him for the real bipartisan effort we have shown—Mr. SMITH typifies that as well—on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

This is an important committee that has broad responsibilities, as this bill indicates; and, in a Congress where, too often, there are divides and bitterness, that committee stands out as a committee of members who work together, who accomplish solutions to very complex international problems that affect us here at home. I know, going forward, I believe very strongly, we are going to have an even larger role in issues to come.

Mr. Speaker, modern-day slavery destroys the lives of far too many innocent people. Today, in 2018, this should no longer be a topic of discussion, yet it is becoming increasingly more problematic.

The solutions are within reach, and that requires coordination and cooperation. This bill does both. We have the information; we have the expertise; now we must act decisively to put the best tools in the right hands to end this injustice once and for all. And by focusing on the financial mechanism that enables this and sustains this, we will be best able to combat it, not just in seeking it out and destroying it, but making sure, in a comprehensive way, we deal with all those wrongdoers that are involved, not just a few at the bottom rung of the ladder.

This bill will give the right people around the table the opportunity to better equip themselves to combat human trafficking and break down the financing that supports and enables this heinous crime.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank my co-authors for their efforts, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, with Chairman SMITH present, I want to speak on the legislation which he previously brought up, the legislation prior to this bill. I want to join him—I am a cosponsor of his legislation—in support of H. Res. 128.

He and KAREN BASS and other Members have worked together as cosponsors of this legislation, and I want to say the Ethiopians are a very proud people. They have a very rich heritage and a very rich history.

Ethiopia is a very important partner for the United States. It has asserted regional influence through rapid economic growth, as we know, and strong cooperation with us on our security initiatives in the region. It has that commitment that it constantly shows towards combating radical jihadist extremism, and it has made notable strides to address domestic challenges of health and child survival and food security.

We have both made trips out there to see that progress, and we celebrate these accomplishments. Ethiopia has come a long way from the devastating famines of the 1980s, and it has achieved much of the benchmarks. Most of the benchmarks that the Millennium Development Goals have set out for it to date have been met.

This resolution recognizes the need to continue a close partnership between the United States and Ethiopia to continue that momentum. But it is because of these important bilateral ties that we must ensure that Ethiopia is respecting good governance and democratic values.

Deeply ingrained ethnic divisions, marginalization, and years of conflict provide unique governance challenges for the country. Advancing democratic values is never easy, but they are the best way to further Ethiopia's progress and to further our robust bilateral relationship.

Reports of widespread human rights abuses and crackdowns on freedom of expression and excessive force against peaceful protestors are unacceptable.

The Government of Ethiopia has released thousands of political prisoners in the last few months, and this is a welcome development. However, the recently reimposed state of emergency criminalizes peaceful assembly and allows state security forces to arrest citizens without charge. This state of emergency must be lifted immediately, which is what this resolution also calls for.

The United States must hold the Government of Ethiopia accountable to the peaceful voices of their citizens, while allowing for inclusive political participation and respecting human rights and freedom of expression.

All parties must come to the table in order to advance democratic principles and chart the course for a prosperous, inclusive, and peaceful Ethiopia; otherwise, stability and economic progress will suffer over the long term.

There is cause for hope, and I commend Dr. Abiy Ahmed for his recent appointment as Prime Minister. I am so encouraged by his call for increased political competition and in defense of fundamental human rights. We hope that, under his leadership, the government will enact meaningful political and social reforms.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my colleague Representative COFFMAN for his work on this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, returning to the End Banking for Human Traffickers Act, I want to again thank my colleagues, the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. ENGEL, Chairman HENSARLING, Ranking Member WATERS of the Financial Services Committee, and, of course, BILL KEATING for their support of this important legislation. And I thank Mr. CHRIS SMITH again.

I have seen some real reasons for hope that I think, when we are talking about a topic that is this grim, it is

good to remind ourselves of how awareness can lead to coordinated action and how that, then, can lead to freeing people from this bondage, especially freeing children from this bondage.

In southern California, we have had great involvement from concerned citizens, certainly from our NGO community, the local law enforcement. I have a trafficking task force that I put together some years ago to bring all of these forces together and work also with victims—survivors, as they refer to themselves—working together to drive these forms of exploitation out of our community; and I have seen some of the effectiveness, especially last October, with the good work of the FBI shutting down, across this Nation, so many of these rings.

But if we are going to be successful in ending this horrific trade, not just here but worldwide, we have got to cut traffickers off from the financial system. These criminals are laundering profits through that financial system far too easily. This bill will help end that easy access, and it is certainly going to strengthen the tools for law enforcement to fight these crimes against human dignity.

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 California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2219, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. 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.

COMBAT ONLINE PREDATORS ACT

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4203) to amend title 18, United States Code, with regard to stalking, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4203

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 "Combat Online Predators Act".

SEC. 2. ENHANCED PENALTY FOR STALKERS OF CHILDREN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 110A of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2261A the following:

"§2261B. Enhanced penalty for stalkers of children

"If the victim of an offense under section 2261A is under the age of 18 years, the maximum imprisonment for the offense is 5 years greater than the maximum term of imprisonment otherwise provided for that offense in section 2261."

(b) *CLERICAL AMENDMENT*.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 110A of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 2261A the following new item:

“2261B. Enhanced penalty for stalkers of children.”.

(c) *CONFORMING AMENDMENT*.—Section 2261A of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking “section 2261(b) of this title” and inserting “section 2261(b) or section 2262B, as the case may be”.

SEC. 3. REPORT ON BEST PRACTICES REGARDING ENFORCEMENT OF ANTI-STALKING LAWS.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall submit a report to Congress, which shall—

(1) include an evaluation of Federal, tribal, State, and local efforts to enforce laws relating to stalking; and

(2) identify and describe those elements of such efforts that constitute the best practices for the enforcement of such laws.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

□ 1815

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4203, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased we are voting on H.R. 4203, the Combat Online Predators Act. This legislation increases the maximum criminal penalty for those who stalk children and obligates the Department of Justice to report best practices for prosecuting stalking laws at the State and local levels.

According to the National Center for Victims of Crime, approximately 7.5 million people are stalked each year. While stalking may not involve physical harm, the psychological effects from being stalked can be just as severe. Stalking victims live in constant fear of violence. They fear it will never stop.

In fact, the prevalence of anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression is much higher amongst stalking victims than the general population. About half of all victims of stalking indicate that they were stalked before age 25, and about 14 percent of female victims and 16 percent of male victims experienced stalking between the ages of 11 and 17.

Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate reality is that, in the internet age, stalking our Nation's youth has become easier for predators. Predators can now har-

ass children in their homes—the very places our children should be safest—and can even do so anonymously.

H.R. 4203 recognizes that those who stalk minors should be subject to greater criminal penalties. The bill increases the maximum allowable prison sentence by 5 years in cases in which the victim is a minor. No child should live in constant fear for their own safety, and this bill will further deter predators from such conduct.

Stalking cases are also notoriously difficult to prosecute because they require showing repeated intentional harassment. It is important for prosecutors to be able to reference best practices in investigating and prosecuting these cases. Therefore, H.R. 4203 requires the Attorney General to issue a report identifying best practices in bringing these cases.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the lead sponsor of this legislation, Congressman BRIAN FITZPATRICK from Pennsylvania. This bill was approved with unanimous, bipartisan support by the House Judiciary Committee, and I urge my colleagues in the House to support this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important bill, and it is a continuation of the recognition of the United States Congress, Republicans and Democrats, on the importance of dealing with online privacy.

In the backdrop of Mr. Zuckerberg testifying in the United States Senate, this bill deals with those who would do dastardly things online. So I rise in support of H.R. 4203, the Combat Online Predators Act of 2017.

This legislation would increase the maximum penalty under current law for stalking offenses when the victim is a minor. Obviously, this is something that is equal to online bullying, in some sense. Stalking is a crime that impacts both adults and young people alike. Unfortunately, it does not receive the urgent attention it warrants, although it severely threatens the safety and the lives of our children as much as other prevalent crimes.

Stalking is one of four enumerated offenses included in the Violence Against Women Act. As we look to reauthorize that bill, I ask that we all take a closer look at stalking provisions.

Let me thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK), and the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY) for their collaboration and excellent work in trying to stop the surge of online predators utilizing the cyber system to stalk young people.

Given the overwhelming use of the internet and social media across the globe, and technological innovations that otherwise enhance our daily lives, online stalking poses a great danger to young people in that it becomes much

easier to carry out this crime and intensify its intrusiveness. The terrible, abusive nature of this crime is especially magnified when the victim is a child or an adolescent.

This widespread problem requires our immediate attention, particularly in this new era where information is easily ascertained, disseminated, and compromised by bad actors and, at times, by providers—even when done so inadvertently.

Current Federal law prohibits narrowly defined instances of stalking, whether accomplished via interstate travel or electronic means. The Combat Online Predators Act of 2017 seeks to address the greater harm that can be inflicted on young victims of stalking. It does this by increasing the maximum prison sentence by 5 years for stalking offenses committed against victims under the age of 18.

Online predators are sexual predators who use information and communication technology to locate, target, and victimize minors. A common forum used to target children include chat rooms, instant messaging, or social networking sites for the purpose of flirting and the ultimate goal of meeting and engaging in sexual activities, either online or in person.

For many young victims, the suffering inflicted as a result of stalking can last a lifetime. In fact, research shows children and adolescents who are victims of stalking are more likely to become victims of stalking as adults. Given the alarming number of children targeted, this result is terrifying for the children, for their family members, and for a lifetime.

Action Against Stalking released a 2012 report that states: “273 children were targeted by predators they did not know who tried to—or did—snatch them.”

There was an attempted kidnapping in my community just a few days ago—not online, but physically—when children were traveling together for an outing. Fifty-two children were snatched. In 22 cases, the offender attempted to take a child in front of their parent. Four cases involved an attempt to take a child from a shopping center.

So this legislation is crucial, and I am delighted to support this legislation because it provides a reasonable means of protecting our young people from stalking, whether online or in person. It helps to ensure that these vulnerable individuals are shielded from the potentially devastating and long-term physical and mental scars that stalking can inflict.

It punishes those who seek to do harm. When a course of harassment and intimidation occurs and rises to the level of stalking by placing the victim in reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury, it is appropriate that law enforcement intervene. This can be critical to our young people, and it is important when people are victimized that we understand that this may

occur in person; online; via cellphones, computers, email, text messages; and on social media by what we call cyber stalking.

The increased maximum penalty for offenses against minors is a sensible modification. I look forward to the continuing debate and ask my colleagues to listen carefully as this debate proceeds.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, at this time, it is my pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK), the chief sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the House Judiciary Committee, the chairman and ranking member, for unanimously advancing the Combat Online Predators Act for full consideration of the House today. I am also very appreciative of the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY) for her tireless, bipartisan leadership in protecting our Nation's children.

This bipartisan legislation was inspired by the story of the Zezzo family of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, whose teenage daughter, Madison, was cyber stalked by a friend's father on social media. Despite the stalking being sexual in nature, the then-51-year-old stalker pleaded guilty only to a misdemeanor stalking charge and was sentenced to probation and counseling. Three years later, in 2016, the very same stalker began making contact again. This time he was arrested in a sting operation by local police and sentenced to between 18 months and 7 years in State prison.

Mr. Speaker, the Zezzo family is here with us today. Their story is the reason that this legislation was written and the reason it will get a full floor vote in the U.S. House of Representatives today.

When I first met the Zezzo family in my office, their sense of fear and anxiety was evident. After hearing of the disturbing story of cyber stalking endured by this young girl and her family for years, it was clear that something needed to be done. As legislators and as citizens, we have no higher calling and no higher responsibility than to protect our children.

We must do everything we can to forcefully respond to egregious instances of stalking and cyber stalking, especially when committed against minors. Our children are the most vulnerable among us.

Mr. Speaker, stories like this, unfortunately, are too common in this country, and they do not always end with a stalker in custody. The Combat Online Predators Act ensures that not only are we increasing penalties for these crimes, but also requiring Federal law enforcement officials to evaluate and update best practices to combat online stalking and online bullying.

This bill provides enhanced criminal penalties for stalkers under title 18 of

the U.S. Code, giving judges more flexibility to impose harsher punishments. Additionally, the Attorney General and the Department of Justice will be required to produce an evaluation of Federal, State, and local efforts to enforce laws relating to cyber stalking and identify and describe elements of these law enforcement efforts that constitute best practices around the Nation.

Cyber stalking is a serious crime that needs to be met with stricter penalties and more cooperation amongst law enforcement agencies both on the Federal, State, and local level.

The Combat Online Predators Act is the first step in making the internet a safer environment for all users, especially our children. This step cannot come soon enough as the National Center for Victims of Crime stated in its endorsement of this legislation: "In today's age where children can be stalked both in person and online, we must ensure that our laws provide real justice for our most vulnerable victims."

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Zezzo family and, in particular, Madison Zezzo for sharing her story so that kids across this Nation can be protected.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY), the original cosponsor, along with Mr. FITZPATRICK of this bill.

Mrs. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be the lead Democrat on this bill, and I want to thank my colleague and friend Congressman BRIAN FITZPATRICK for his leadership on this important issue.

This bipartisan legislation toughens Federal antistalking laws by increasing the penalty for convicted defendants by up to 5 additional years when their victim is a minor. The bill also requires the Department of Justice to review the enforcement of stalking laws at the State and Federal level and to identify best practices for enforcing such laws. Publishing best practices will help law enforcement agencies and prosecutors around the country secure convictions in these difficult cases.

There is nothing more important than protecting our children from harm. Those adults who harass or intimidate minors, whether in cyberspace or in our communities, must understand that the penalty for their conduct will be severe.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased the House will approve this bill today, and I urge the Senate to swiftly do the same.

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

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

Let me thank the two original cosponsors of this legislation, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY), for their leadership.

As technology advances, we are faced with more and more challenges. It is

important to note that, among female victims of stalking, an estimated 16.3 percent were first stalked before the age of 18, and an estimated 3.5 percent between the ages of 11 and 17.

Of the male stalking victims, an estimated 20.5 percent first experienced stalking before the age of 18—this is clearly legislation that is needed—while 16.2 percent were first stalked before the age of 11 and 17.

This underlying bill is to help protect our children. This legislation does not require mandatory minimums. This sentencing that has been included is at the discretion of the judge, but as we reckon with the question of privacy, cybersecurity, protecting our children from bullying, this legislation is very important to move us one step forward to provide a safe place of learning and also a place of quality as our children grow in this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for support of the underlying bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time, only to urge my colleagues to support this very strong, bipartisan legislation.

I want to congratulate the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MURPHY). I want to thank the ranking member of our Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations Subcommittee for her work in this area.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4203, 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. GOODLATTE. 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.

□ 1830

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4790, VOLCKER RULE REGULATORY HARMONIZATION ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND RULES

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-629) on the resolution (H. Res. 811) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4790) to amend the Volcker rule to give the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System sole rulemaking authority, to exclude