

serious criminals by bringing charges under Criminal Code provisions that H.R. 498 would repeal, this bill serves as an important reminder that Congress should be careful not to enact new criminal penalties when they are not warranted.

We must resist overcriminalization, which fosters disrespect for the seriousness of the law and leads to collateral consequences for offenders that are often catastrophic to them and their ability to function in and contribute to their communities.

It is my hope that, in this new Congress, we will be able to work on a bipartisan basis to expand our efforts to make our criminal justice system more fair and, thereby, also more effective.

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 Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 498.

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.

CAESAR SYRIA CIVILIAN PROTECTION ACT OF 2019

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 31) to require certain additional actions in connection with the national emergency with respect to Syria, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 31

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 “Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019”.

TITLE I—ADDITIONAL ACTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO SYRIA

SEC. 101. MEASURES WITH RESPECT TO CENTRAL BANK OF SYRIA.

(a) DETERMINATION REGARDING CENTRAL BANK OF SYRIA.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Treasury shall determine, under section 5318A of title 31, United States Code, whether reasonable grounds exist for concluding that the Central Bank of Syria is a financial institution of primary money laundering concern.

(b) ENHANCED DUE DILIGENCE AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—If the Secretary of the Treasury determines under subsection (a) that reasonable grounds exist for concluding that the Central Bank of Syria is a financial institution of primary money laundering concern, the Secretary, in consultation with the Federal functional regulators (as defined in section 509 of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (15 U.S.C. 6809)), shall impose one or more of the special measures described in section 5318A(b) of title 31, United States Code, with respect to the Central Bank of Syria.

(c) REPORT REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after making a determination under sub-

section (a) as to whether or not the Central Bank of Syria is a financial institution of primary money laundering concern, the Secretary of the Treasury shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that includes the reasons for the determination.

(2) FORM.—A report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

(3) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

SEC. 102. SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO FOREIGN PERSONS THAT ENGAGE IN CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS.

(a) IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On and after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to a foreign person if the President determines that the foreign person, on or after such date of enactment, knowingly engages in an activity described in paragraph (2).

(2) ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED.—A foreign person engages in an activity described in this paragraph if the foreign person—

(A) knowingly provides significant financial, material, or technological support to, or knowingly engages in a significant transaction with—

(i) the Government of Syria (including any entity owned or controlled by the Government of Syria) or a senior political figure of the Government of Syria;

(ii) a foreign person that is a military contractor, mercenary, or a paramilitary force knowingly operating in a military capacity inside Syria for or on behalf of the Government of Syria, the Government of the Russian Federation, or the Government of Iran; or

(iii) a foreign person subject to sanctions pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) with respect to Syria or any other provision of law that imposes sanctions with respect to Syria;

(B) knowingly sells or provides significant goods, services, technology, information, or other support that significantly facilitates the maintenance or expansion of the Government of Syria's domestic production of natural gas, petroleum, or petroleum products;

(C) knowingly sells or provides aircraft or spare aircraft parts that are used for military purposes in Syria for or on behalf of the Government of Syria to any foreign person operating in an area directly or indirectly controlled by the Government of Syria or foreign forces associated with the Government of Syria;

(D) knowingly provides significant goods or services associated with the operation of aircraft that are used for military purposes in Syria for or on behalf of the Government of Syria to any foreign person operating in an area described in subparagraph (C); or

(E) knowingly, directly or indirectly, provides significant construction or engineering services to the Government of Syria.

(3) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that, in implementing this section, the President should consider financial support under paragraph (2)(A) to include the provision of loans, credits, or export credits.

(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The sanctions to be imposed with respect to a foreign person subject to subsection (a) are the following:

(A) BLOCKING OF PROPERTY.—The President shall exercise all of the powers granted to the President under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in property and interests in property of the foreign person if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(B) ALIENS INELIGIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(i) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—An alien who the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) knows, or has reason to believe, has knowingly engaged in any activity described in subsection (a)(2) is—

(I) inadmissible to the United States;

(II) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

(III) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(ii) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The issuing consular officer, the Secretary of State, or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) shall, in accordance with section 221(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(i)), revoke any visa or other entry documentation issued to an alien described in clause (i) regardless of when the visa or other entry documentation is issued.

(II) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—A revocation under subclause (I)—

(aa) shall take effect immediately; and

(bb) shall automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the alien's possession.

(2) PENALTIES.—The penalties provided for in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) shall apply to a person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of regulations promulgated under section 303 to carry out paragraph (1)(A) to the same extent that such penalties apply to a person that commits an unlawful act described in section 206(a) of that Act.

(3) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT.—Sanctions under paragraph (1)(B) shall not apply with respect to an alien if admitting or paroling the alien into the United States is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations.

TITLE II—ASSISTANCE FOR THE PEOPLE OF SYRIA

SEC. 201. CODIFICATION OF CERTAIN SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS' ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b), section 542.516 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations (relating to certain services in support of nongovernmental organizations' activities authorized), as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, shall—

(1) remain in effect on and after such date of enactment; and

(2) in the case of a nongovernmental organization that is authorized to export or reexport services to Syria under such section on

the day before such date of enactment, apply to such organization on and after such date of enactment to the same extent and in the same manner as such section applied to such organization on the day before such date of enactment.

(b) EXCEPTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 542.516 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, as codified under subsection (a), shall not apply with respect to a foreign person that has been designated as a foreign terrorist organization under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189), or otherwise designated as a terrorist organization, by the Secretary of State, in consultation with or upon the request of the Attorney General or the Secretary of Homeland Security.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to a foreign person on and after the date on which the designation of that person as a terrorist organization is published in the Federal Register.

SEC. 202. BRIEFING ON STRATEGY TO FACILITATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on the strategy of the President to help facilitate the ability of humanitarian organizations to access financial services to help facilitate the safe and timely delivery of assistance to communities in need in Syria.

(b) CONSIDERATION OF DATA FROM OTHER COUNTRIES AND NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS.—In preparing the strategy required by subsection (a), the President shall consider credible data already obtained by other countries and nongovernmental organizations, including organizations operating in Syria.

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

TITLE III—GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 301. SUSPENSION OF SANCTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President may suspend in whole or in part the imposition of sanctions otherwise required under this Act for periods not to exceed 180 days if the President determines that the following criteria have been met in Syria:

(1) The air space over Syria is no longer being utilized by the Government of Syria or the Government of the Russian Federation to target civilian populations through the use of incendiary devices, including barrel bombs, chemical weapons, and conventional arms, including air-delivered missiles and explosives.

(2) Areas besieged by the Government of Syria, the Government of the Russian Federation, the Government of Iran, or a foreign person described in section 102(a)(2)(A)(ii) are no longer cut off from international aid and have regular access to humanitarian assistance, freedom of travel, and medical care.

(3) The Government of Syria is releasing all political prisoners forcibly held within the prison system of the regime of Bashar al-Assad and the Government of Syria is allowing full access to the same facilities for investigations by appropriate international human rights organizations.

(4) The forces of the Government of Syria, the Government of the Russian Federation, the Government of Iran, and any foreign per-

son described in section 102(a)(2)(A)(ii) are no longer engaged in deliberate targeting of medical facilities, schools, residential areas, and community gathering places, including markets, in violation of international norms.

(5) The Government of Syria is—

(A) taking steps to verifiably fulfill its commitments under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, done at Geneva September 3, 1992, and entered into force April 29, 1997 (commonly known as the “Chemical Weapons Convention”), and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, done at Washington, London, and Moscow July 1, 1968, and entered into force March 5, 1970 (21 UST 483); and

(B) making tangible progress toward becoming a signatory to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, done at Washington, London, and Moscow April 10, 1972, and entered into force March 26, 1975 (26 UST 583).

(6) The Government of Syria is permitting the safe, voluntary, and dignified return of Syrians displaced by the conflict.

(7) The Government of Syria is taking verifiable steps to establish meaningful accountability for perpetrators of war crimes in Syria and justice for victims of war crimes committed by the Assad regime, including by participation in a credible and independent truth and reconciliation process.

(b) BRIEFING REQUIRED.—Not later than 30 days after the President makes a determination described in subsection (a), the President shall provide a briefing to the appropriate congressional committees on the determination and the suspension of sanctions pursuant to the determination.

(c) REIMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—Any sanctions suspended under subsection (a) shall be reimposed if the President determines that the criteria described in that subsection are no longer being met.

(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority of the President to terminate the application of sanctions under section 102 with respect to a person that no longer engages in activities described in subsection (a)(2) of that section.

(e) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Ways and Means, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

SEC. 302. EXEMPTIONS; WAIVERS; EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS.

(a) EXEMPTIONS.—The following activities and transactions shall be exempt from sanctions authorized under this Act:

(1) Any activity subject to the reporting requirements under title V of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.), or to any authorized law enforcement, national security, or intelligence activities of the United States.

(2) Any transaction necessary to comply with United States obligations under—

(A) the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into

force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States;

(B) the Convention on Consular Relations, done at Vienna April 24, 1963, and entered into force March 19, 1967; or

(C) any other international agreement to which the United States is a party.

(b) WAIVER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may, for periods not to exceed 180 days, waive the application of any sanction authorized under this Act with respect to a foreign person if the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that such a waiver is in the national security interests of the United States.

(2) BRIEFING.—Not later than 90 days after the issuance of a waiver under paragraph (1), and every 180 days thereafter while the waiver remains in effect, the President shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on the reasons for the waiver.

(c) HUMANITARIAN WAIVER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may waive, for renewable periods not to exceed 2 years, the application of any sanction authorized under this Act with respect to a nongovernmental organization providing humanitarian assistance not covered by the authorization described in section 201 if the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that such a waiver is important to address a humanitarian need and is consistent with the national security interests of the United States.

(2) BRIEFING.—Not later than 90 days after the issuance of a waiver under paragraph (1), and every 180 days thereafter while the waiver remains in effect, the President shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on the reasons for the waiver.

(d) EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The authorities and requirements to impose sanctions authorized under this Act shall not include the authority or requirement to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(2) GOOD DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “good” means any article, natural or man-made substance, material, supply or manufactured product, including inspection and test equipment, and excluding technical data.

(e) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, the Committee on Ways and Means, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

SEC. 303. REGULATORY AUTHORITIES.

The President shall, not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, promulgate regulations as necessary for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 304. SUNSET.

This Act shall cease to be effective on the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. 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 H.R. 31, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, as amended, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is the third time I have stood on the House floor to argue in favor of passing this bill, to argue that we need to dial up the pressure on the Assad regime; that we need to crack down on his enablers, namely, Iran and Russia; and that we need to push for a political solution that will end the years of horrific bloodshed.

I made that case in November 2016, when the House unanimously passed a version of this bill. I did it again in May of 2017, and again it passed unanimously, only to languish in the other body for the rest of the Congress, stopped by one single Senator.

In Syria, in the last 26 months that have come since the House first passed this bill, the suffering has continued. Over the last few weeks, in the Rukban refugee camp, 13 babies froze to death, and 50,000 more displaced people in this camp are at grave risk. They have nowhere else to go. Unchecked, the Assad regime will likely move in and massacre these innocent people.

I could go on and on, detailing the horrors the Syrian people have endured at the hands of this butcher, Assad. I could describe the atrocities we saw in photographs smuggled out of Syria by Caesar, the government photographer who defected and after whom this bill is named.

But after years of unrelenting bloodshed, it is long past time for more talk about Syria. We need action, and my legislation would be an important step in the right direction.

This bill would slap sanctions on anyone who does business with the Assad regime. It would go after anyone who provides financing or parts for aircraft that are used to bomb civilians or works with the energy or construction sectors controlled by the Syrian Government.

We don't want to do accidental harm with this bill, so we have made sure that it would not affect NGOs providing assistance, and we want the administration to use this tool to create leverage, so sanctions could be waived or suspended if meaningful negotiations were moving forward.

In this respect, this bill encourages diplomacy and a peaceful, sustainable solution to the conflict in Syria.

Some people may be resigned to the idea that Assad is simply going to take over the country. I disagree. The United States should not abandon our options for applying pressure to the re-

gime. Syria with Assad at the helm is a recipe for sustained conflict, not sustainable peace. For me, sustainable peace for the people of Syria has always been the goal.

Let me be very clear: This bill would impose Syria-related sanctions; it would not impose nuclear-related sanctions.

I know many of my colleagues are concerned about our withdrawal from the JCPOA. This legislation is entirely consistent with what President Obama promised us after entering into the Iran nuclear deal, that we would continue to sanction Iran for its destabilizing activities in the region. Sanctions under this bill would not prevent a future President of the United States from returning to the Iranian nuclear agreement.

There is obviously no easy solution for the crisis in Syria. It wouldn't have raged on for years and years if there were a simple path out of it. But this bill represents one tool the administration can use to try to move toward that solution, to break the status quo.

I also want to mention the fact that so many wonderful Syrian American groups have been fighting for this legislation, have been fighting against the Assad regime, and have really worked so hard over these past years. It has really been good working with them, although, obviously, very, very difficult.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, January 5, 2019.

Hon. ELIOT L. ENGEL,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENGEL: I am writing concerning H.R. 31, the "Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019."

As a result of your having consulted with the Committee on Financial Services concerning provisions in the bill that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction, I agree to forgo action on the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor. The Committee on Financial Services takes this action with our mutual understanding that, by foregoing consideration of H.R. 31 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this or similar legislation moves forward. Our Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation and request your support for any such request.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 31 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

MAXINE WATERS,
Chairwoman.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, January 10, 2019.

Hon. MAXINE WATERS,
Chairwoman, Committee on Financial Services,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN WATERS: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 31, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019.

I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively on this legislation. I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Financial Services. I acknowledge that your Committee will not formally consider H.R. 31 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the matters contained in H.R. 31 which fall within your Committee's Rule X jurisdiction.

I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with you as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

ELIOT L. ENGEL,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 9, 2019.

Hon. ELIOT L. ENGEL,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENGEL: I am writing with respect to H.R. 31, the "Caesar Syria Civilian Act of 2019." As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions on which the Committee on Ways and Means has a jurisdictional interest, I will not request a sequential referral on this measure.

The Committee on Ways and Means takes this action with the mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues within our jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and requests your support for such request.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 31.

Sincerely,

RICHARD E. NEAL,
Chairman.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, January 10, 2019.

Hon. RICHARD E. NEAL,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee on H.R. 31, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019, and for agreeing to forgo a sequential referral request so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your declining to pursue a referral in this case does not diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your Committee over any parts of the bill under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with

you as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

ELIOT L. ENGEL,
Chairman.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, January 10, 2019.

Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, House
of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NADLER: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 31, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019.

I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively on this legislation. I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary. I acknowledge that your Committee will not formally consider H.R. 31 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the matters contained in H.R. 31 which fall within your Committee's Rule X jurisdiction.

I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with you as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

ELIOT L. ENGEL,
Chairman.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, January 11, 2019.

Hon. ELIOT L. ENGEL,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This is to advise you that the Committee on the Judiciary has now had an opportunity to review the provisions in H.R. 31, the "Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019," that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction. I appreciate your consulting with us on those provisions. The Judiciary Committee has no objection to your including them in the bill for consideration on the House floor, and to expedite that consideration is willing to waive sequential referral, with the understanding that we do not thereby waive any future jurisdictional claim over those provisions or their subject matters.

In the event a House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation is convened, the Judiciary Committee reserves the right to request an appropriate number of conferees to address any concerns with these or similar provisions that may arise in conference.

Please place this letter into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our committees.

Sincerely,

JERROLD NADLER,
Chairman,
House Committee on the Judiciary.

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

Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act authored by my good friend Chairman ENGEL.

For nearly 7 years, we have watched the barbaric Assad regime launch countless attacks on the people of Syria. Since the conflict began in 2011, more than 500,000 people have been killed and 14 million have been forced from their homes.

This destabilizing exodus has imposed painful burdens on neighboring

countries. Our committee has heard disturbing testimony directly from Syrians caught up in this horrific nightmare. In fact, I recently met with the brave defector known to the world as Caesar, for whom this bill is named.

His story is gut-wrenching. He told me about the shocking scale of torture and murder being carried out within the prisons of Syria. The photographic evidence he smuggled out and showed to us proves beyond any doubt the brutality of Bashar al-Assad. The images are shocking and indelible.

The bill before us today will increase international pressure on Assad and his backers by targeting their means of support. Foreign companies and banks will have to choose between doing business with Assad or with the United States.

The bill will also sanction anyone who flies weapons or fighters into Syria to support his murderous regime.

This bill is about creating leverage to push the parties to negotiate. It is about finding a way forward, to be determined by the Syrian people, that does not allow Assad to continue to exterminate them or drive them from their homes.

This bill, as the chairman said, has passed the House twice and is long overdue. I am confident it will pass tonight, and I hope that the Senate will take it up promptly in the new Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to join us as we seek to ease the immense suffering of the people of Syria and give them a better hope for the future, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this legislation, H.R. 31, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019. I am a proud original cosponsor of this legislation.

Over 7 years, nearly half a million Syrians killed, 6 million Syrians driven from their country, over 10 million Syrians displaced and forced from their homes, and countless acts of atrocities from the Assad regime.

Clearly, it is time for this Congress to act, and this bill would do that. It would bring much-needed accountability to the Assad regime, which is responsible for horrific crimes, crimes against its own people. It would do so by allowing sanctions to be imposed on people who contribute to these cold-hearted and merciless acts.

It would require the Treasury Department to determine whether to target Syria's Central Bank with money laundering countermeasures.

Quite simply, I agree with Chairman ENGEL. We need a political solution that ends Assad's crimes, removes him from power, and allows the Syrian people to develop their own future for their own country.

Assad must be held accountable for the massacre of his own people, and this bill will begin to do just that.

Additionally, Russia and Assad must stop standing by and systematically allowing ISIS to attack minority populations in Syria, including the Druze people.

We cannot expect much from these actors, but it is incumbent upon them to protect minority populations in Syria in the territory that they control. Further, it is also the responsibility of the President of the United States and his national security team to speak with one voice regarding our policy in Syria and the region.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. KILDEE. The President has, time and time again, illustrated that our allies and our adversaries simply cannot trust what the President says. The administration needs to articulate a cohesive strategy for the region and for Syria, particularly after the President, with no warning to our partners, announced the U.S. withdrawal.

□ 1645

Finally, Mr. Speaker, like Chairman ENGEL, I thank all of those who have advocated for this bill, for their tenacity, for their engagement, and I urge my colleagues to join with them and stand up for them and immediately pass this critical legislation to hold Assad accountable.

Mr. McCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), an original cosponsor of the bill.

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished ranking member, and I, too, add my thanks to Chairman ENGEL and his predecessor, Chairman Royce, for their intense and passionate work on this important subject.

I was an original cosponsor, and I support the passage of H.R. 31, the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act. This legislation imposes new sanctions on Syrian human rights abusers and those who facilitate the regime's atrocities. It also authorizes the State Department to support entities that are collecting and preserving that chain of evidence for eventual prosecution of those who have committed war crimes in Syria since the war began in 2011.

The world has witnessed many examples of butchering and genocide by menaces throughout history: Hitler, Stalin, and Mao. They are joined in the last 8 years by a new name, and that is Assad and his Russian and Iranian collaborators.

Until Mr. Trump's strategic airstrikes, for the prior 8 years, the world has blustered and twiddled while these modern menaces murdered the innocent civilian population in Syria. Systematically, they savagely bombed, bludgeoned, gassed, electrocuted, and tortured their people. I have seen this evidence on full display in Washington's Holocaust museum, and I urge all Americans to look at that exhibit.

I have heard eyewitness testimony from the Syrian Emergency Task Force. Listen to the horrors, Mr. Speaker:

A survivor of a gas attack told *The New York Times* in 2017:

My eyes were burning, my head was throbbing, and my throat was blocked. I was suffocating. I tried to inhale, but all I heard was a horrible rasping sound as my throat closed up. An unbearable pain drummed in my head. The world began to blur. I pounded my chest, but I couldn't breathe. I thought my heart was going to explode.

Does this Congress need any more testimony, Mr. Speaker?

I commend President Trump for hearing these cries and his leadership to carry out airstrikes to block Assad's mass murder, and I call on him again to strengthen his resolve against Assad's barbarous acts and think of these innocent Syrian people who face these terrible atrocities nearly every day.

Finally, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 31, and I call on the Senate to not twiddle their thumbs any longer and act with expedition and pass this legislation. Let's not waste any more time bringing Assad and his co-conspirators to justice.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I once again recognize the work of Chairman ENGEL, his cosponsors, and former Chairman Royce.

Those of us who have talked to eyewitnesses and seen video and photos will never forget the atrocities perpetrated by Bashar al-Assad: the bombing of the hospitals, the torture of prisoners, and the gassing of children who died agonizing deaths in their beds.

For 7 years international diplomats have debated ways to protect civilians in Syria, with no results. Today, we send a strong message that the United States will work to ensure that Assad's war machine is halted.

It is not too late to act, as Mr. HILL eloquently stated. The people of Syria cannot afford further delay. I urge all Members to support it, and I sure hope this time the Senate will be able to pass it.

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

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

In closing, let me thank the ranking member, Mr. McCAUL, for his very important words.

The world has failed the Syrian people. Nothing can undo the horrors they have had, and they have had to endure them for nearly 8 years. Nothing can bring back those who have been lost. But the world owes it to the living and the dead to try and bring this crisis to an end.

The role America must play is to push for a political solution that allows the Syrian people to choose their own future. That is what American

leadership looks like. That is what sets us apart from other great powers on the world stage.

We simply cannot look the other way and allow Assad, Russia, and Iran to steamroll over Syria. That would send a terrible message to our allies. It would undermine security across the entire region, and it would cost so many more innocent lives.

My bill would give the administration greater leverage to raise the cost for Assad and crack down on his lifelines. I ask that all Members support this measure.

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 New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 31, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DIRECTING SECRETARY OF STATE TO DEVELOP STRATEGY TO REGAIN OBSERVER STATUS FOR TAIWAN IN WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 353) to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to regain observer status for Taiwan in the World Health Organization, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 353

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

SECTION 1. PARTICIPATION OF TAIWAN IN THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations, charged with coordinating health efforts within the United Nations system. The World Health Assembly (WHA) is the decision-making body of the WHO, which convenes annually in May to set the policies and priorities of the organization. Statehood is not a requirement for attendance at the WHA, and numerous observers, including non-members and non-governmental organizations, attended the most recent WHA in May 2018.

(2) Taiwan began seeking to participate in the WHO as an observer in 1997. In 2009, with strong support from successive United States Administrations, Congress, and like-minded WHO Member States, and during a period of improved Cross-Strait relations, Taiwan received an invitation to attend the WHA as an observer under the name "Chinese Taipei". Taiwan received the same invitation each year until 2016, when following the election of President Tsai-Ing Wen of the Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan's engagement in the international community began facing increased resistance from the People's Republic of China (PRC). Taiwan's invitation to

the 2016 WHA was received late and included new language conditioning Taiwan's participation on the PRC's "one China principle". In 2017 and 2018, Taiwan did not receive an invitation to the WHA.

(3) Taiwan remains a model contributor to world health, having provided financial and technical assistance to respond to numerous global health challenges. Taiwan has invested over \$6 billion in international medical and humanitarian aid efforts impacting over 80 countries since 1996. In 2014, Taiwan responded to the Ebola crisis by donating \$1 million and providing 100,000 sets of personal protective equipment. Through the Global Cooperation and Training Framework, the United States and Taiwan have jointly conducted training programs for experts to combat MERS, Dengue Fever, and Zika. These diseases know no borders, and Taiwan's needless exclusion from global health cooperation increases the dangers presented by global pandemics.

(4) Taiwan's international engagement has faced increased resistance from the PRC. Taiwan was not invited to the 2016 Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), despite participating as a guest at the organization's prior summit in 2013. Taiwan's requests to participate in the General Assembly of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) have also been rejected. In May 2017, PRC delegates disrupted a meeting of the Kimberley Process on conflict diamonds held in Perth, Australia, until delegates from Taiwan were asked to leave. Since 2016, the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, the Republic of Panama, the Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, and the Republic of El Salvador have terminated longstanding diplomatic relationships with Taiwan and granted diplomatic recognition to the PRC.

(5) Congress has established a policy of support for Taiwan's participation in international bodies that address shared transnational challenges, particularly in the WHO. Congress passed H.R. 1794 in the 106th Congress, H.R. 428 in the 107th Congress, and S. 2092 in the 108th Congress to direct the Secretary of State to establish a strategy for, and to report annually to Congress on, efforts to obtain observer status for Taiwan at the WHA. Congress also passed H.R. 1151 in the 113th Congress, directing the Secretary to report on a strategy to gain observer status for Taiwan at the ICAO Assembly, and H.R. 1853 in the 114th Congress, directing the Secretary to report on a strategy to gain observer status for Taiwan at the INTERPOL Assembly. However, since 2016 Taiwan has not received an invitation to attend any of these events as an observer.

(b) AUGMENTATION OF REPORT CONCERNING THE PARTICIPATION OF TAIWAN IN THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 1 of Public Law 108-235 (118 Stat. 656) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(3) An account of the changes and improvements the Secretary of State has made to the United States plan to endorse and obtain observer status for Taiwan at the World Health Assembly, following any annual meetings of the World Health Assembly at which Taiwan did not obtain observer status."

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect and apply beginning with the first report required under subsection (c) of section 1 of Public Law 108-235 that is submitted after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from