

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3694, the Helping Families Fly Act.

Traveling through the airport can be a stressful time for many of our travelers. Pregnant women and families with young children sometimes experience more difficulty when traveling, especially during the screening process.

TSA's current screening procedures must be improved to ensure that these families are supported and have an easier experience flying through America's airports.

This bill will improve the screening process for pregnant women and their families by requiring security personnel to undergo training specific to the concerns and needs of these specific travelers.

Additionally, this legislation requires TSA to increase awareness of security procedures and guidelines by utilizing various forms of communication to keep families informed of the different options they may have during the screening process. This includes providing passengers, upon request, support specialists for women and families and adequate opt-out options to allow passengers to undergo alternative screening procedures.

In short, this bill helps to improve TSA operations and support the millions of pregnant women and young families who travel throughout our Nation's airports.

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

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3694, the Helping Families Fly Act, sponsored by my friend and colleague from Arizona, Representative LESKO.

H.R. 3694 requires TSA to implement a number of reforms aimed at improving the travel experience for pregnant women and families with young children, including specific assistance by TSA officers at checkpoints and new training for officers.

Representative LESKO's bill will ensure that TSA works closely with transportation stakeholders to make pregnant travelers and families aware of screening procedures and options for assistance.

This good-government bill recognizes that TSA is oftentimes seen as the face of the Department of Homeland Security, screening more than 2 million passengers a day. As such, it is incumbent upon the agency to ensure its services are working for all travelers.

H.R. 3694 will improve the passenger experience for pregnant women and families with young children. I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I am prepared to

close after the gentleman from Tennessee closes.

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

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mrs. LESKO).

Mrs. LESKO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my bipartisan legislation, H.R. 3694, the Helping Families Fly Act.

I believe strongly that TSA's passenger screening checkpoints should be a family-friendly environment. Airports can already be stressful places for the traveling public, and that stress can be exacerbated for expecting mothers or families traveling with young children.

That is why I introduced this bill, which directs TSA to train frontline personnel on how to appropriately address traveler concerns related to screening technologies and opt-out procedures.

Additionally, H.R. 3694 seeks to improve the passenger screening process by increasing the availability of frontline TSA personnel and passenger support specialists for pregnant women and families with young children.

Moreover, my legislation requires TSA to communicate across its various media platforms, and in partnership with transportation stakeholders, any improvements, procedures, changes, or services relevant to pregnant women and families with young children.

Lastly, H.R. 3694 will examine whether certain checkpoints may accommodate dedicated family-friendly screening lanes, which will improve the experience for traveling families while also improving the operation across all checkpoint lanes.

Mr. Speaker, as the ranking member of the Transportation and Maritime Security Subcommittee, as well as a mother and grandmother, I believe that we should be holding TSA accountable in how it interacts with the traveling public and facilitates the efficient and effective screening of passengers who are pregnant and traveling with young families.

I thank the chairman of the Transportation and Maritime Security Subcommittee, Representative CORREA, for his bipartisan support of this legislation. We don't always have a lot of that here, so I am very thankful that we were able to agree on this bill.

Additionally, I thank Chairman THOMPSON and Ranking Member ROGERS for their work to bring this bill to the floor today and all the bill's co-sponsors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation to make travel more friendly.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers on the bill. I renew my support for the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3694 will improve the traveling experience for pregnant women and young families traveling throughout our Nation's airports.

By improving the awareness and skills of our security personnel, and providing more resources and support for our families, we will help ensure that our Nation's airports provide a safe, fair, and efficient traveling experience for all.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona for offering this good legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3694, and 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. CORREA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3694.

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.

JOINT TASK FORCE TO COMBAT OPIOID TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2019

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3722) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize a Joint Task Force to enhance integration of the Department of Homeland Security's border security operations to detect, interdict, disrupt, and prevent narcotics, such as fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, from entering the United States, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3722

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 "Joint Task Force to Combat Opioid Trafficking Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF JOINT TASK FORCE TO COUNTER OPIOIDS.

Subsection (b) of section 708 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 348) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(A), by adding at the end the following new clause:

"(iv) Enhancing the integration of the Department's border security operations to detect, interdict, disrupt, and prevent narcotics, such as fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, from entering the United States.";

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (9) through (13) as paragraphs (11) through (15), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after paragraph (8) the following new paragraphs:

"(9) ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The Director of a Joint Task Force may engage with representatives from a private sector organization for the purpose of carrying out the mission of such Joint Task Force, and any such engagement shall not be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

"(B) ASSISTANCE FROM PRIVATE SECTOR.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (b)(1), the Secretary, with the agreement of a private sector organization, may arrange for the temporary assignment of an employee of such organization to a Joint Task Force in accordance with this paragraph.

“(ii) AGREEMENT.—The Secretary shall provide for a written agreement between the Department, the private sector organization concerned, and the employee concerned regarding the terms and conditions of the assignment of such employee under this paragraph.

“(C) NO FINANCIAL LIABILITY.—Any agreement under this paragraph shall require the private sector organization concerned to be responsible for all costs associated with the assignment of an employee under this paragraph.

“(D) DURATION.—An assignment under this paragraph may, at any time and for any reason, be terminated by the Secretary or the private sector organization concerned and shall be for a total period of not more than two years.

“(10) COLLABORATION WITH TASK FORCES OUTSIDE DHS.—The Secretary may enter into a memorandum of understanding by which a Joint Task Force established under this section to carry out any purpose specified in paragraph (2)(A) and any other Federal, State, local, Tribal, territorial, or international entity or task force established for a similar purpose may collaborate for the purpose of carrying out the mission of such Joint Task Force.”.

SEC. 3. NOTIFICATION; REPORTING.

(a) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall—

(1) make a determination regarding whether to establish a Joint Task Force under section 708 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to carry out the purpose specified in clause (iv) of subsection (b)(2)(A) of such section, as added by section 2 of this Act; and

(2) submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate written notification of such determination, including, if such determination is in the negative, information on the basis for such negative determination.

(b) REPORTING.—If the Secretary of Homeland Security establishes a Joint Task Force under section 708 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to carry out the purpose specified in clause (iv) of subsection (b)(2)(A) of such section, as added by section 2 of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(1) beginning with the first report required under subsection (b)(6)(F) of such section 708, include with respect to such a Joint Task Force—

(A) a gap analysis of funding, personnel, technology, or other resources needed in order to detect, interdict, disrupt, and prevent narcotics, such as fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, from entering the United States; and

(B) a description of collaboration pursuant to subsection (b)(10) of such section (as added by section 2 of this Act) between such a Joint Task Force and any other Federal, State, local, Tribal, territorial, or international task force, including the United States Postal Service and the United States Postal Inspection Service; and

(2) in each review required under subsection (b)(11)(C) of section 708 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as redesignated by section 2 of this Act, an assessment of the activities of such a Joint Task Force, including an evaluation of whether such Joint Task Force has enhanced integration of the

Department's efforts, created any unique capabilities, or otherwise enhanced operational effectiveness, coordination, or information sharing to detect, interdict, disrupt, and prevent narcotics, such as fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, from entering the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, every day, in communities across this country, synthetic opioids kill Americans in shocking numbers. H.R. 3722 will take a step forward by addressing this epidemic, which is one of the most severe ever facing our country.

The opioid crisis, having already claimed hundreds of thousands of American lives over the past two decades, has evolved into a new and even more dangerous phase.

The first periods of the crisis were characterized by the overuse of prescription opioids and heroin. Devastating as these stages were, the current phase is even more deadly still.

Fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are coming into our country from laboratories in China and Mexico and are wreaking havoc on communities across the entire country. These extremely potent chemicals frequently cross our borders through legal channels such as international mail facilities, sometimes in small packages, and are difficult to detect or interdict. The bill now before us aims to address part of this challenge.

The Joint Task Force to Combat Opioid Trafficking Act, sponsored by Representative JIM LANGEVIN, passed through the House on a voice vote during the 115th Congress before stalling in the Senate. This Congress, the bill, once again, passed out of the Committee on Homeland Security with unanimous consent.

The core of this bill will require the Department of Homeland Security to stand up a joint task force dedicated to preventing synthetic opioids from reaching our borders. The joint task force model allows DHS to ensure that the strengths and capabilities of its various components are all leveraged to maximum effect.

Steps such as improved screening procedures, greater targeting of suspicious senders, and better information-sharing processes can all aid our

law enforcement agencies in halting the ongoing flow of synthetic opioids across our borders.

Unlike the existing authority governing DHS joint task forces, this bill will allow DHS and the private sector the opportunity to collaborate on this challenge. Private-sector partners also have strengths and capabilities that can greatly enhance joint efforts to prevent legitimate commercial activities from being exploited by bad actors.

The crisis at hand requires innovative solutions. A greater focus on increased collaboration between DHS, its components, and private-sector partners all could go a long way in addressing a major driver of this crisis.

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

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3722.

The opioid epidemic continues to devastate communities across this Nation. Approximately 115 Americans die every single day from an opioid overdose. Opioid abuse doesn't discriminate. It touches people from every age group, race, class, gender, background, and economic status.

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Some Americans become addicted after taking doctor-prescribed doses for an injury or a surgery, while others try them in illicit forms and become dependent.

Another disturbing trend we are seeing is illicit drugs being laced with fentanyl, which is 100 times more powerful than morphine, frequently leading to accidental overdose.

We have seen estimates concluding that more than 2 million of our fellow Americans are addicted to opioids, and, as a physician, I have seen lives devastated, families disrupted and often destroyed as the addict's behavior drives them to horrific acts.

As we work to confront this epidemic, we must prevent overprescription, stop the illicit flow into the United States, and treat those Americans who have become addicted.

This bill would authorize a joint task force within the Department of Homeland Security to organize opioid interdiction efforts across multiple components and agencies in a unity-of-effort campaign. It would also leverage domestic and international partners to provide a multifaceted approach to tackling the issue.

Most illicit opioids are produced in China and smuggled by mail, where vulnerabilities in the postal system are exploited. U.S. Customs and Border Protection is also seeing increased traffic from Mexico with opioids hidden in vehicles and cargo entering through the U.S. ports.

The joint task force approach to the opioid epidemic is effective because it fosters information sharing and exchange between all relevant stakeholders to combat the opioid epidemic.

While there are no quick or easy solutions to this epidemic, H.R. 3722 is a step in the right direction. I support this bill, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3722, the Joint Task Force to Combat Opioid Trafficking Act of 2019.

Mr. Speaker, we are in the midst of a public health emergency that has devastated communities across the country, including in my home State of Rhode Island.

No matter your race, gender, age, or religion, Americans are suffering from the opioid overdose epidemic. In 2017, approximately 47,600 fatalities were attributed to opioid overdose.

Fentanyl is exacerbating the problem. This powerful, synthetic opioid, 25 to 50 times stronger than heroin and 50 to 100 times more powerful than morphine, caused more than 15 times more deaths in 2017 than in 2009.

The majority of opioids interdicted by the United States law enforcement agencies are seized at ports of entry. In fact, the southern border accounts for at least 75 percent of all opioids collected.

I am pleased to offer a solution with my colleagues, Mr. KING from New York, Mr. ROSE, and Mr. McCAUL, that will strengthen the Department of Homeland Security's fight against the drug crisis.

This bill authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a task force to enhance the internal integration of the Department's border security operations to detect, interdict, disrupt, and prevent narcotics, including fentanyl, from entering the United States in the first place.

Secretary Johnson was the first to use the joint task force model to achieve better unity of effort across the Department's components.

All of DHS' many agencies, from Customs and Border Protection to the United States Coast Guard, have an important role to play when it comes to combating opioid trafficking. So if the Homeland Security investigations are looking into a fentanyl distribution ring, for example, in Omaha, they need to coordinate efforts with Customs offices in El Paso so that packages en route to Nebraska are properly interdicted.

The JTF model is intended to ensure this coordination is baked into the culture of DHS so that cases don't slip through the cracks. Congress recognized the value of Secretary Johnson's pilot JTFs when we formally authorized them in 2016.

As new challenges confront the Department, we must make use of this organizational structure in innovative ways to maintain the synergies that

drove the creation of DHS in the first place.

Stopping proliferation of fentanyl is particularly well-suited to the JTF approach. Unlike many more traditional narcotics, fentanyl is often shipped directly to dealers from overseas. Fentanyl's extremely high potency allows these shipments to be small enough to go undetected unless carefully scrutinized. That is why it is essential that the joint task force on opioids collaborate with private-sector organizations and any other Federal, State, local, Tribal, territorial, or international entity to increase operational effectiveness, coordination, and information sharing.

We need to work with partners, especially the United States Postal Service and private parcel delivery services like UPS and FedEx to ensure suspicious packages are inspected. Having a single task force coordinating the Department's efforts makes it much easier for other organizations to know whom to call.

So this crisis gripping our Nation is, obviously, very complex. We cannot succeed in stemming the opioid epidemic unless the Federal Government recognizes the opportunity to integrate and collaborate—not only across agencies, but also with our private-sector partners.

So like every bill that makes its way to the floor, this legislation is a result, of course, of a collaborative effort. I have to begin by thanking former Senator Claire McCaskill, who has been a true champion in driving policy to address the opioid crisis and who first proposed applying the JTF model to this epidemic.

I must also thank my good friend, longtime colleague on the committee, and cosponsor, Congressman PETER KING, who is helping ensure that this effort is a bipartisan one; Mr. McCAUL, who helped get this bill to the last Congress; and, of course, Mr. ROSE, who has been a real champion in helping to combat the opioid crisis and who has had an immediate impact fighting opioids since he came to Congress earlier this year.

I am grateful also to Chairman THOMPSON for his continued leadership on using all of the powers of DHS to combat this epidemic.

Like anything we do, nothing would have been possible, of course, without tireless staff work, and particularly that of Rosaline Cohen and Alex Carnes with the committee; my legislative director, Nick Leiserson; and also Elyssa Malin, a former staffer in my office.

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

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Rhode Island.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the additional time.

As I said before, the opioid epidemic is increasingly complex, with a number of factors driving the tragic increases

in overdose. There is no silver bullet; rather, we need a whole-of-society approach. This bill will bring that unity of effort to the Department of Homeland Security so that it can be a more effective partner in turning the tide against opioid abuse.

I hope all of my colleagues will join me in supporting the creation of a joint task force on opioids and support this bill.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers for the bill. I renew my support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, our country faces a severe and ongoing crisis, with newly developed synthetic opioids causing tremendous suffering to our families, individuals, and entire communities throughout the country. The collaboration between private companies and the government that will be possible through this legislation will prove to be a crucial component in the task of stopping the flow of fentanyl across our borders.

H.R. 3722 is a bipartisan and targeted solution to address this most urgent need. I encourage my colleagues to support this bill, and 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. CORREA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3722.

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. CORREA. 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.

TRAVELING PARENTS SCREENING CONSISTENCY ACT OF 2019

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3246) to require GAO review of certain TSA screening protocols, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3246

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 "Traveling Parents Screening Consistency Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. COMPTROLLER GENERAL REVIEW.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a review of the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) implementation of the Bottles and Breastfeeding Equipment Screening Act (Public Law 114-293), as well as the effectiveness of TSA in ensuring screening protocol clarity and screening consistency relating to the screening of formula,