

The bipartisan PACT Act goes a step further and outlaws this malicious animal cruelty, regardless of the presence of video evidence.

Mr. Speaker, as a former FBI agent, my agency's profiling studies demonstrated how violence against animals is a precursor to human violence. That is why we are fighting aggressively against egregious animal cruelty and why it is so important.

Law enforcement, including the FOP, strongly supports this legislation because it provides another tool for them to use for animal abuse cases that might otherwise go unprosecuted.

More than 100 law enforcement agencies and organizations across our country have endorsed the PACT Act. We must come together and stand up for innocent, defenseless animals, which is why there are over 300—in fact, 301, to be exact—cosponsors, both Democrats and Republicans, on this bill.

I commend Senator TOOMEY, our colleague from Pennsylvania, for introducing the companion bill in the Senate. We must pass the PACT Act as soon as possible so that it can be signed into law, and we must make sure that this type of animal abuse no longer happens.

Together, we will end all types of animal cruelty and will continue to be a voice for the voiceless.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), the chairman of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus, an original cosponsor of the PACT Act, and a great voice for animals and animal rights.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy and his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, it is a breath of fresh air for us in these sort of, shall we say, troubled times in our Nation's Capital, when there is so much discord and disagreement, and it seems we can't really agree on fundamental facts: Is today Tuesday or Wednesday?

Animal welfare is one of those issues that brings people together on a bipartisan basis.

I am pleased that the bipartisan Congressional Animal Welfare Caucus has been involved in advancing this. Animal cruelty has been an area in which I have been involved since the beginning of my tenure in Congress. We fought, in farm bills, for years to try to advance protections against animal cruelty.

I am pleased that we are here today dealing with something where Congress has already acted to make these provisions illegal. But what we haven't done is make it illegal to depict these horrific crush videos.

It was horrifying, when we brought that legislation to the floor, for people to understand what some sick, sadistic people do in portraying these horrific acts of cruelty. What we find is that it is linked to larger issues.

People who abuse animals are often linked to horrific instances of violence

against their family and community. It is dehumanizing to us all, as well as, of course, the cruelty that is involved there.

We need to enact this legislation to make the actual creation of the depiction of the animals being abused illegal.

For example, the PACT Act would allow for charges to be brought against a puppy mill operator who is drowning unwanted animals if he is engaged in interstate activity. It would take strides to protect our overall communities from violent crime.

I would hope that this would also signal more activity on the floor of this House because we have a range of legislation that is teed up and ready to go that has broad, bipartisan support.

I appreciate the fact that we are getting 290, or whatever the number is, but life is short. We ought to be able to move these items with broad, bipartisan support to the floor.

We shouldn't necessarily be here just renaming post offices on a Monday. I mean, these are substantive issues that matter to people. We ought to be moving them through. I think this is an important first step, and I am pleased to add my support to it.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS).

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, we are standing here today in support of the PACT Act, to make it a crime to commit abuse that has already been detected in videos or the videos that we have made illegal.

We need to render the acts illegal. We need to enforce detection. We need to support enforcement writ large. We need to stand up for the rights of animals and stand up against animal cruelty.

I come from the great State of Michigan, and this is something that I have heard from my residents from all corridors throughout my district.

We are home to great equine farms as well as other establishments that care for animals, and that is a message that we want to put forward. We want to stop animal abuse on the front end and also stop other forms of domestic abuse that may arise from it.

I led the Department of Justice appropriations process that directs the use of Department of Justice funds to enforce our Nation's animal cruelty laws. Today, with the PACT Act, we are realizing another important step in protecting the rights of animals and in stopping abuse before it starts.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 724, the PACT Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, we should do everything we can to prevent the torture of animals and take steps to hold accountable those who would engage in such horrific acts.

The PACT Act is a significant Federal measure to help put an end to the abuse of animals.

I am thankful to be on the House floor at this incredibly gratifying bipartisan moment, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan bill.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge every companion animal that has brought love to my staff members since the PACT Act was first introduced. Those would be Thomas Jefferson, Desi, Stella, Dock, Bubba, Maple, Hazel, Cheech, Ollie, Frodo, Theo, Johnson Tiki, Tankford, Littleman, Natale, Enzo, Dino, Virgil, Rooney, Maybeline, Prudence, Peppermint, Nazca, Poseidon, Gus, Sansa, Tony, Dwyane Wade, and my dearly departed Jessie.

For all of them and for every animal who brings joy to everyone in this Chamber, let's do our part to prevent animal cruelty and torture, and let's pass the PACT Act.

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 Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 724, 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.

DIVISIONAL REALIGNMENT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS ACT OF 2019

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1123) to amend title 28, United States Code, to modify the composition of the eastern judicial district of Arkansas, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1123

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 "Divisional Realignment for the Eastern District of Arkansas Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. REALIGNMENT OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS.

Section 83(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"Eastern District

"(a) The Eastern District comprises three divisions.

"(1) The Central Division comprises the counties of Cleburne, Cleveland, Conway, Dallas, Drew, Faulkner, Grant, Jefferson, Lincoln, Lonoke, Perry, Pope, Prairie, Pulaski, Saline, Stone, Van Buren, White, and Yell.

Court for the Central Division shall be held at Little Rock.

"(2) The Delta Division comprises the counties of Arkansas, Chicot, Crittenden, Desha, Lee, Monroe, Phillips, and St. Francis.

Court for the Delta Division shall be held at Helena.

“(3) The Northern Division comprises the counties of Clay, Craighead, Cross, Fulton, Greene, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett, Randolph, Sharp, and Woodruff. Court for the Northern Division shall be held at Jonesboro.”.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act and the amendment made by this Act shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. RESCHENTHALER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. 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 the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 1123, which would amend current law to reduce the number of operating divisions in the Eastern District of Arkansas from five to three.

This legislation, introduced by Congressman RICK CRAWFORD from Arkansas, has the support of every member of the Arkansas congressional delegation.

The bill was prompted by the closure in 2017 of the only Federal courthouses in two of the divisions. The three new divisions created by H.R. 1123 would align with the three remaining courthouses in that district. The new divisional lines are based on caseload history and travel times to the remaining courthouses.

As chairman of the Judiciary Committee's subcommittee with jurisdiction over the courts, it is a priority of mine to ensure that people across this Nation have ready access to the Federal judiciary.

In the context of a bill such as that under consideration here today, I mean that in a very literal sense, ensuring that jurisdictional lines are appropriately drawn so that those residing in their bounds are not unduly burdened by travel time to a courthouse. But this must be balanced against closing courthouses where resources are not being used efficiently.

I am satisfied that such a balance has been achieved here, given the support this bill has gotten from the Judicial Conference, the Judicial Council of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, and the chief judge of the Eastern District of Arkansas.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this legislation and urge my colleagues to support it as well, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1123, the Divisional Realignment for the Eastern District of Arkansas Act of 2019, introduced by my Republican colleague from Arkansas, Representative RICK CRAWFORD.

H.R. 1123 reduces the existing divisions in the Eastern District of Arkansas from five to three, limiting the burden caused by two courthouse closures. It allows the Eastern District of Arkansas to better balance its caseload, account for geographical differences, and align with the judicial work generated by correctional facilities.

H.R. 1123 is supported by the Judicial Conference, the Judicial Council of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, the chief judge of the Eastern District of Arkansas, and all the members of the Arkansas delegation.

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

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

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. CRAWFORD), my good friend and the sponsor of this measure.

□ 1700

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you it won't take 2 minutes to say what I have to say.

I certainly want to thank each side of the aisle for supporting H.R. 1123, the Divisional Realignment for Eastern District of Arkansas Act of 2019.

I want to thank Chairman NADLER and Ranking Member COLLINS for marking up this important legislation.

Following the Federal Judiciary's efforts to reduce space, the Federal courthouses in Batesville and Pine Bluff, Arkansas, were closed. However, the Eastern District of Arkansas has been required to maintain the organizational divisions mandated by the statute.

This bill simply corrects that disparity and reduces divisions in the Eastern District from five to three, aligning divisions with remaining courthouses.

The new districts have been carefully designed to maximize access to justice, considering highway access, geography, and case load history. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time so that I can close.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

I would just like to say that, again, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 1123, the Divisional Realignment for the Eastern District of Arkansas Act of 2019.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1123 is a straightforward bill that better aligns the divisions of the Eastern District of Arkansas with the

current operations of that district, and so I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

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. 1123.

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.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4617, STOPPING HARMFUL INTERFERENCE IN ELECTIONS FOR A LASTING DEMOCRACY ACT

Mr. HASTINGS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 116-253) on the resolution (H. Res. 650) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4617) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to clarify the obligation to report acts of foreign election influence and require implementation of compliance and reporting systems by Federal campaigns to detect and report such acts, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO BOARD OF VISITORS TO THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 14 U.S.C. 1903(b), and the order of the House of January 3, 2019, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Coast Guard Academy:

Mr. CUNNINGHAM, South Carolina.

GEORGIA SUPPORT ACT

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 598) to support the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Georgia, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 598

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Georgia Support Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows: