

to be instrumental in keeping inpatient services here through cooperation with other stakeholders, and we are equally as proud to see this new facility come to fruition.

The new facility is a state-of-the-art hospital with emergency and surgical services, fifteen inpatient rooms, an infusion clinic, MRI services and other imaging services, a new cafeteria, gift shop and more. This eighty-seven thousand square-foot facility will be an asset and treasure in the Hornell community.

I cannot thank the doctors, medical professionals, board members, administration and other staff members enough for the work they do in the Hornell community. They have saved lives, provided excellent care for a plethora of years and we are all grateful in the Twenty-Third Congressional District of New York for the work they do each and every day. I congratulate St. James Hospital on the new facility and wish them many more years of extraordinary healthcare services.

Given the above, I ask that this Legislative Body join me to recognize the dedication of the new St. James Hospital in Hornell, New York.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KIM SCHRIER

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 2020

Ms. SCHRIER. Madam Speaker, I was traveling to Washington State to help officials and my constituents best prepare for and contain COVID-19 (coronavirus).

As a result, I missed Roll Call vote number 87 regarding the Cisneros Amendment to H.R. 1140. Had I been present, I would have voted YES.

I missed Roll Call vote number 88 regarding my amendment offered by Representative MUCARSEL-POWELL to H.R. 1140. This amendment would ensure that TSA officers have the proper guidance regarding prevention and protections against the coronavirus. I thank Representative MUCARSEL-POWELL for offering this amendment in my absence. Had I been present, I would have voted YES.

I missed Roll Call vote number 89 regarding the Republican Motion to Recommit on H.R. 1140. Had I been present, I would have voted YES.

I missed Roll Call vote number 90 regarding final passage of H.R. 1140. Had I been present, I would have voted YES.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN W. ROSE

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 2020

Mr. JOHN W. ROSE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, on the night of March 2nd into the early morning of March 3rd, several tornadoes struck Middle Tennessee, inflicting severe damage and taking numerous lives. Most of the devastation occurred in my congressional district, the Sixth District of Tennessee, including my hometown, Cookeville, TN.

After careful consideration, my family and I returned home to Cookeville, TN, on March

3rd so that we could meet with local officials and first responders to assess the damage for ourselves and lend a helping hand to our friends and neighbors wherever it might be needed. Because of our decision to return home, I was absent for votes today.

I missed Roll Call vote number 87. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

I missed Roll Call vote number 88. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

I missed Roll Call vote number 89. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

I missed Roll Call vote number 90. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

RIGHTS FOR TRANSPORTATION SECURITY OFFICERS ACT OF 2020

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 4, 2020

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chair, I rise to speak in strong support of H.R. 1140, the Rights for Transportation Security Officers Act of 2020, which will create civil service protections for TSA employees that are long overdue.

H.R. 1140, mandates the conversion of all covered employees and positions within the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to the provisions of title 5, United States Code.

The bill represents a longstanding priority for Chairman THOMPSON, the bill's author, and my own as a former chair of the Homeland Security Committee's Subcommittee on Transportation Security to extend the rights and protections afford to all federal government employees to TSA personnel.

Several versions of the bill have been introduced over the past decade, but this Congress is the first time the bill has received overwhelming, bipartisan support, with 236 cosponsors including 10 Republicans.

The legislation curtails TSA's broad authorities to create and control its personnel systems, instead requiring TSA to abide by the provisions of title 5 which regulate personnel systems for most Federal agencies.

The bill would provide TSA employees with the workforce protections and benefits available to most other Federal workers.

The bill sets forth transition rules to protect the rate of pay and other rights of TSA employees during a transition to title 5.

The bill also requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to consult with the appropriate labor organizations to carry out the transition.

This bill does not affect prohibitions against disloyalty and asserting the right to strike against the federal government.

The bill also extends the timeline for the transition from 60 days to a more realistic 180 days, and it contains language to protect employees with grievances or disciplinary actions pending during the transition.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, nearly 3,000 people were killed in a series of coordinated terrorist attacks in New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

The attacks resulted in the creation of the Transportation Security Administration, which was designed to prevent similar attacks in the future by removing the responsibility for transportation security from private entities.

The Aviation and Transportation Security Act, passed by the 107th Congress and signed on November 19, 2001, established TSA just 2 months following the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The urgent need to provide a response to the available security threat was facing meant that much of the work to provide administrative structure and integration measures that would have woven in the civil service protections now be added did not occur at that time.

The TSA's mission is to protect the nation's transportation systems to ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce.

The work of the TSA is a frontline Department of Homeland Security and it is not easy—it can in fact be very dangerous.

Like many of my colleagues, I recall the shooting incident at LAX that killed Gerardo Hernandez, who became the first TSA officer killed in the line of duty; and the machete attack at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport that resulted in injuries to Senior Transportation Security Officer Carol Richel.

These incidents only highlight the difficult work that the men and women of the TSA must perform each day to keep our nation's airports and flights safe.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) supports several key parts of the U.S. coronavirus response.

The TSA is responsible for: enforcing the travel restrictions for all flights that are carrying individuals who have recently traveled from China; notifying passengers and travelers of risks of contracting the virus; and coordinating with air carriers and airports to discuss government actions and seek input (TSA).

Allegations about mismanagement, wasteful procedures, retaliation against whistleblowers, low morale, and security gaps within the Agency are causes for concern.

TSA has consistently struggled with low morale across the workforce, ranking 303 out of 305 government agencies in 2016.

Low morale has a nexus to the high turnover rate within the ranks of Transportation Security Officers (TSOs).

TSOs represent 70 percent of the TSA workforce, yet have been denied full collective bargaining rights, whistleblower protections, and opportunities to effectively raise issues in dispute to an independent third party, such as the Merit Systems Protection Board.

Additionally, TSOs are subject to a pay and performance system that does not track with the General Services (GS) wage system, the primary wage system for Federal workers.

It is past time to make the changes provided by H.R. 1140, so the TSA workforce is treated equally to other federal employees with the power to advance and expand their opportunities as government employees.

I ask my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 1140.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LLOYD DOGGETT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 5, 2020

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, with yesterday's storms in Texas, my early morning post-election day flight to Washington was delayed, preventing my arrival before the