He and I have worked closely on several bills to strengthen our child protection laws.

We don't have to look any farther than our homes and communities to see that predators are threatening and victimizing our children with one simple click. The Internet, while providing a world of opportunity to our children, has also contributed to a worldwide expansion of child pornography—enabling online predators to more easily abuse, exploit, and prey on our children.

S. 1738 recognizes that a comprehensive strategy, one that mobilizes the resources of the community as well as local, state, and federal law enforcement, is necessary to crack down on these criminals. Moreover, S. 1738 recognizes that by building on the investigative tools already in place under the leadership of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, law enforcement officials and the public can provide and receive valuable information needed for ongoing investigations.

I would like to thank my colleagues in both the House and Senate for recognizing that our laws and resources need to stay current with the advances made in technology. Predators know no boundaries and have used technology to their advantage. The PROTECT Act recognizes that a more comprehensive approach is needed to ensure that investigators and prosecutors have the tools to stay one click ahead of these criminals.

I urge my colleagues to support passage of S. 1738.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers on this bill, and I will yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. I yield back the remaining time on this side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1738.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DRUG TRAFFICKING VESSEL INTERDICTION ACT OF 2008

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 3598) to amend titles 46 and 18, United States Code, with respect to the operation of submersible vessels and semi-submersible vessels without nationality.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 3598

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 ''Drug Trafficking Vessel Interdiction Act of 2008''.

TITLE I—CRIMINAL PROHIBITION

SEC. 101. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS.

Congress finds and declares that operating or embarking in a submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel without nationality and on an international voyage is a serious international problem, facilitates trans-national crime, including drug trafficking, and terrorism, and presents a specific threat to the safety of maritime navigation and the security of the United States.

SEC. 102. OPERATION OF SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL OR SEMI-SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL WITHOUT NATIONALITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 111 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 2285. OPERATION OF SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL OR SEMI-SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL WITHOUT NATIONALITY.

''(a) OFFENSE.—Whoever knowingly operates, or attempts or conspires to operate, by any means, or embarks in any submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel that is without nationality and that is navigating or has navigated into, through, or from waters beyond the outer limit of the territorial sea of a single country or a lateral limit of that country's territorial sea with an adjacent country, with the intent to evade detection, shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 15 years, or both.

''(b) EVIDENCE OF INTENT TO EVADE DETECTION.—For purposes of subsection (a), the presence of any of the indicia described in paragraph (1)(A), (E), (F), or (G), or in paragraph (4), (5), or (6), of section 70507(b) of title 46 may be considered, in the totality of the circumstances, to be prima facie evidence of intent to evade detection.

''(c) EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION.—There is extraterritorial Federal jurisdiction over an offense under this section, including an attempt or conspiracy to commit such an offense.

''(d) CLAIM OF NATIONALITY OR REGISTRY.—A claim of nationality or registry under this section includes only—

''(1) possession on board the vessel and production of documents evidencing the vessel's nationality as provided in article 5 of the 1958 Convention on the High Seas;

''(2) flying its nation's ensign or flag; or

''(3) a verbal claim of nationality or registry by the master or individual in charge of the vessel.

''(e) AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—It is an affirmative defense to a prosecution for a violation of subsection (a), which the defendant has the burden to prove by a preponderance of the evidence, that the submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel involved was, at the time of the offense—

''(A) a vessel of the United States or lawfully registered in a foreign nation as claimed by the master or individual in charge of the vessel when requested to make a claim by an officer of the United States authorized to enforce applicable provisions of United States law;

''(B) classed by and designed in accordance with the rules of a classification society;

''(C) lawfully operated in government-regulated or licensed activity, including commerce, research, or exploration; or

''(D) equipped with and using an operable automatic identification system, vessel monitoring system, or long range identification and tracking system.

''(2) PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS.—The affirmative defenses provided by this subsection are proved conclusively by the production of—

''(A) government documents evidencing the vessel's nationality at the time of the offense, as provided in article 5 of the 1958 Convention on the High Seas;

''(B) a certificate of classification issued by the vessel's classification society upon completion of relevant classification surveys and valid at the time of the offense; or

''(C) government documents evidencing licensure, regulation, or registration for commerce, research, or exploration.

''(f) FEDERAL ACTIVITIES EXCEPTED.—Nothing in this section applies to lawfully authorized activities carried out by or at the direction of the United States Government.

''(g) APPLICABILITY OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—Sections 70504 and 70505 of title 46 apply to offenses under this section in the same manner as they apply to offenses under section 70503 of such title.

''(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms 'submersible vessel', 'semi-submersible vessel', 'vessel of the United States', and 'vessel without nationality' have the meaning given those terms in section 70502 of title 46.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The chapter analysis for chapter 111 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 2284 the following:

''2285. Operation of submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel without nationality''.

SEC. 103. SENTENCING GUIDELINES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Pursuant to its authority under section 994(p) of title 28, United States Code, and in accordance with this section, the United States Sentencing Commission shall promulgate sentencing guidelines (including policy statements) or amend existing sentencing guidelines (including policy statements) to provide adequate penalties for persons convicted of knowingly operating by any means or embarking in any submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel in violation of section 2285 of title 18, United States Code.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out this section, the United States Sentencing Commission shall—

(1) ensure that the sentencing guidelines and policy statements reflect the serious nature of the offense described in section 2285 of title 18, United States Code, and the need for deterrence to prevent such offenses;

(2) account for any aggravating or mitigating circumstances that might justify exceptions, including—

(A) the use of a submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel described in section 2285 of title 18, United States Code, to facilitate other felonies;

(B) the repeated use of a submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel described in section 2285 of title 18, United States Code, to facilitate other felonies, including whether such use is part of an ongoing criminal organization or enterprise;

(C) whether the use of such a vessel involves a pattern of continued and flagrant violations of section 2285 of title 18, United States Code;

(D) whether the persons operating or embarking in a submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel willfully caused, attempted to cause, or permitted the destruction or damage of such vessel or failed to heave to when directed by law enforcement officers; and

(E) circumstances for which the sentencing guidelines (and policy statements) provide sentencing enhancements;

(3) ensure reasonable consistency with other relevant directives, other sentencing guidelines and policy statements, and statutory provisions;

(4) make any necessary and conforming changes to the sentencing guidelines and policy statements; and

(5) ensure that the sentencing guidelines and policy statements adequately meet the purposes of sentencing set forth in section 3553(a)(2) of title 18, United States Code.

TITLE II—CIVIL PROHIBITION

SEC. 201. OPERATION OF SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL OR SEMI-SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL WITHOUT NATIONALITY.

(a) FINDING AND DECLARATION.—Section 70501 of title 46, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(1)'' after ''that''; and

(2) by striking ''States.'' and inserting ''States and (2) operating or embarking in a submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel without nationality and on an international voyage is a serious international problem, facilitates transnational crime, including drug trafficking, and terrorism, and presents a specific threat to the safety of maritime navigation and the security of the United States.''.

SEC. 202. OPERATION PROHIBITED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 705 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following:

''§ 70508. Operation of submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel without nationality

''(a) IN GENERAL.—An individual may not operate by any means or embark in any submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel that is without nationality and that is navigating or has navigated into, through, or from waters beyond the outer limit of the territorial sea of a single country or a lateral limit of that country's territorial sea with an adjacent country, with the intent to evade detection.

''(b) EVIDENCE OF INTENT TO EVADE DETECTION.—In any civil enforcement proceeding for a violation of subsection (a), the presence of any of the indicia described in paragraph (1)(A), (E), (F), or (G), or in paragraph (4), (5), or (6), of section 70507(b) may be considered, in the totality of the circumstances, to be prima facie evidence of intent to evade detection.

''(c) DEFENSES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—It is a defense in any civil enforcement proceeding for a violation of subsection (a) that the submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel involved was, at the time of the violation—

''(A) a vessel of the United States or lawfully registered in a foreign nation as claimed by the master or individual in charge of the vessel when requested to make a claim by an officer of the United States authorized to enforce applicable provisions of United States law;

''(B) classed by and designed in accordance with the rules of a classification society;

''(C) lawfully operated in government-regulated or licensed activity, including commerce, research, or exploration; or

''(D) equipped with and using an operable automatic identification system, vessel monitoring system, or long range identification and tracking system.

''(2) PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS.—The defenses provided by this subsection are proved conclusively by the production of—

''(A) government documents evidencing the vessel's nationality at the time of the offense, as provided in article 5 of the 1958 Convention on the High Seas;

''(B) a certificate of classification issued by the vessel's classification society upon completion of relevant classification surveys and valid at the time of the offense; or

''(C) government documents evidencing licensure, regulation, or registration for research or exploration.

''(d) CIVIL PENALTY.—A person violating this section shall be liable to the United States for a civil penalty of not more than $1,000,000.''

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) The chapter analysis for chapter 705 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 70507 the following:

''70508. Operation of submersible vessel or semi-submersible vessel without nationality''.

(2) Section 70504(b) of title 46, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''or 70508'' after ''70503''.

(3) Section 70505 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by striking ''this title'' and inserting ''this title, or against whom a civil enforcement proceeding is brought under section 70508,''.

SEC. 203. SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL AND SEMI-SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL DEFINED.

Section 70502 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following:

''(f) SEMI-SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL; SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL.—In this chapter:

''(1) SEMI-SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL.—The term 'semi-submersible vessel' means any watercraft constructed or adapted to be capable of operating with most of its hull and bulk under the surface of the water, including both manned and unmanned watercraft.

''(2) SUBMERSIBLE VESSEL.—The term 'submersible vessel' means a vessel that is capable of operating completely below the surface of the water, including both manned and unmanned watercraft.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, the House has passed previously virtually identical legislation, and accordingly I will place my statement in the RECORD at this time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill addresses the growing national security threat of illicit self-propelled submersible vessels. It makes operation of one of these vessels with intent to avoid detection a felony, as well as subject to civil fines.

In July, the House passed the part of this bill creating the felony. This Senate version adds the civil penalty, to provide even greater deterrence.

Smugglers are operating these vessels with increasing frequency, knowing that there is no effective deterrent. They are designed so that the crew members can readily sink them within scant minutes of being spotted, thereby making efforts by authorities to intercept them exceedingly difficult and highly risky.

And smugglers using these vessels are becoming increasingly violent. Two weeks ago, a cocaine smuggler attempted to kill Coast Guard officers who had boarded his vessel in the dark in the Pacific ocean.

This extreme risk to our brave Coast Guard officers would not have been necessary if operating that vessel in this evasive manner were itself a crime.

I commend the sponsor of the House bill, DAN LUNGREN of California, for his leadership on this initiative.

I urge my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to my colleague on the Judiciary Committee, a senior member of the Judiciary Committee, a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee as well, the gentleman from California (Mr. LUNGREN).

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bill which Congressman POE and I have worked on to address a serious problem relating to the use of submersible and semi-submersible vessels to transport drugs, people and potentially weapons of mass destruction which pose a threat to our communities and our cities. The drug dealers are always ingenious in their activities to try and inject into the veins of our children the terrible illicit drugs that are there. With respect to those who are in Central and South America, because of the various efforts made by good men and women working in law enforcement in this country, as well as those in our military organizations, they have been forced, that is, the drug dealers, have been forced to find new ways to try and bring this poison to our shores.

That is what we're dealing with here today. The language in the bill before us reflects the hard work of Senator LAUTENBERG, and it is also similar to legislation which was introduced by Senator BIDEN. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Chairman CONYERS who has played a critical role in the development of this legislation. And I add that without the hard work of his counsel and the hours put into this important bill by Carolyn Lynch on our staff, we would not be here today.

Let me point out that it is probably not an exaggeration to suggest that this is noncontroversial legislation. I don't know why anybody, a single vote, would be against it. It has, in slightly different iterations, already passed this body on two prior occasions. It passed this body by a vote of 408–1 as an amendment to the Coast Guard authorization, and it passed on suspension this past July 29 by a voice vote.

What are these things? Well you're going to hear it, and you're going to see some pictures presented to you by Congressman TED POE from Texas. Let me just try to describe what it is that we are talking about.

Semi-submersibles add a new dimension to the notion of ''submarine warfare.''

□ 1800

These vessels are watercraft of unorthodox construction capable of putting much of their bulk under the surface of the water. Therefore, they are extremely difficult to spot when they are out there in the vastness of the ocean. They are built for stealth, designed to be rapidly scuttled, typically less than 100 feet in length, and usually carrying

5 to 6 tons of illicit cargo. They are stateless, that is, they carry the flag of no country, and they have no legitimate use.

Although semi-submersibles are being used to evade detection and prosecution for drug traffic, my own interest in this issue is a much broader one. The potential that someone might seek to import a weapon of mass destruction into the United States is perhaps of the greatest concern for us and why we need an aggressive response to alter the calculus of deterrence with respect to the use of these vehicles.

It is absolutely critical that our prosecutors be equipped with the tools necessary to adapt to this new challenge facing law enforcement authorities. As was the case in previous House versions of the bill approved by this body, the proposal before us provides for criminal fines and up to 15 years imprisonment. Furthermore, a new title of the bill added in the Senate provides prosecutors with the additional option of seeking civil penalties of up to $1 million for violations of the new law.

Since we last visited this legislation on July 29, we have further evidence of why it is so necessary. In the last 2 weeks alone, the Coast Guard has seized two semi-submersible vehicles containing a total of 14 tons of cocaine. Ominously, they found the vessels seized on September 13th to be the most sophisticated of their type ever detected, with electronic propulsion and steering, and exhaust systems more advanced than earlier models. In terms of the larger picture, we have witnessed 62 such seizures this year.

Why do we need this legislation? Why did the Coast Guard ask us for it? Simply put, it is this: These are made to be scuttled easily. In other words, when they are detected by the Coast Guard and the United States Navy, sometimes hundreds of miles offshore, when they are identified, when they are seen, they are scuttled, meaning that they intentionally attempt to sink their own vehicles. Why? Because then we can't have the evidence of the illicit cargo that they hold. And as they do that, the two, three, four or five people aboard, the personnel aboard these crafts jump into the water, and then we have to rescue them. So our law enforcement and our Navy then is in the position of rescuing the very people who are attempting to bring this poison into our country, and we obviously do that, but then we can't prosecute them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHILDERS). The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from California 1 additional minute.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. This law would simply make it illegal to operate one of these vessels if it is unflagged, because there is no other purpose for it than to try and put a dagger to the hearts of our young people in this country by bringing this illicit drug trade here.

Additionally, those concerned about illegal aliens entering this country, this is also a means of doing that. But, most importantly and most directly, I would say, think of the consequences of someone introducing a weapon of mass destruction into this country. This is a readily available vehicle to do that.

We need this legislation. I would hope that we would have a unanimous vote for it.

I thank the gentleman from Texas for allowing me this time, and I hope everybody understands how important and how timely this is.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank again the gentleman from California (Mr. LUNGREN), as well as my colleague from Texas (Mr. POE), for championing this issue.

I now yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding, the ranking member, and I also want to thank the chairman of this committee for bringing this legislation before the House, and, of course, my friend from California, the former Attorney General, Mr. LUNGREN, for his passion about this issue.

As a former judge and prosecutor down in Texas, I don't like drug dealers, and we see the effect of them throughout the United States.

This submersible vessel, this submarine we are talking about, Mr. Speaker, here is a photograph of it right here. It is 100 feet long. It is made out of fiberglass. It has stealth technology, so it is hard to be detected. It is built so it goes barely below the surface. It travels at a very low rate of speed so it cannot be detected by its wake. And they are made in the jungles of Colombia.

What they do, they float these down the rivers in flood season to the Pacific Ocean, and then this vessel is on its way. Mr. Speaker, it can go all the way to the United States without refueling. It takes several tons of cocaine with it, coming to the United States, bringing that cancer for the profit of the Colombian drug dealers.

What happens is our Navy and other navies, even the Mexican Navy, the Colombian Navy, they have seen these things on the high seas. They carry no flag. They claim no nation. What happens when they are encountered by the Navy or the Coast Guard, the five or six crew members, they jump out the hatch over here and scuttle the submarine so all the dope goes to the bottom of the ocean.

There have been two circumstances when the drug dealers that were on these submarines weren't quick enough. The Navy, the Coast Guard, got there quick enough to take some of the cocaine off, and they are being prosecuted in Florida as we speak. But most of the time they scuttle it, we capture, but really end up rescuing the crew, and then rather than put them in jail, we have got to take them home where they came from and let them go, because it is no crime to possess one of these subs on the high seas.

This legislation makes it a Federal offense to have one of these subs with no flag and sailing on the high seas. When the crew is captured, they could be prosecuted in our Federal courts and go to the penitentiary where they belong.

The U.S. Coast Guard tells us that at any given time, there are 100 of these things on the high seas, all coming to the United States bringing drugs.

As my good friend Mr. LUNGREN from California has pointed out, that is not just the problem, because they are so shallow, because they are hard to detect, these things can bring in weapons of mass destruction, explosives, and work their way up the riverways of our Nation, going to our ports, like the Port of Houston and some of these other ports, and cause tremendous damage. We want to capture these people on the high seas before they get that opportunity.

Some have said, why don't we just shoot them out of the water as soon as we see them? I guess we are too civilized for that. We want to prosecute them instead.

This is important legislation. It will help our law enforcement guys, the Navy and U.S. Coast Guard, who are doing a tremendous job already in tracking these people, with cooperation from other navies throughout the world. It is time that we make this legislation law.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas again for his efforts on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as we stand here today, dangerous drug traffickers are surreptitiously moving tons of cocaine across our oceans and into America. Cocaine traffickers operate with stealth and are virtually undetectable thanks to their use of self-propelled submersible and semi- submersible vessels or SPSS.

These submarine-like vessels have unusual construction. They are typically less than 100 feet long with most of their bulk under water. They can carry up to five crew and as much as 12 metric tons of cocaine from the north coast of South America to the southeastern United States without refueling.

The U.S. Coast Guard has successfully apprehended two SPSS vessels in just the last few weeks. One carried seven tons of cocaine with a street value of $187 million. The second vessel seized was carrying 295 bales of cocaine.

However, under current law, it is not illegal to operate one of these vessels. Therefore, in order to successfully prosecute these criminals, the Coast Guard must obtain evidence of drug trafficking or other illicit conduct—a dangerous proposition on the high seas.

Coast Guard teams must physically board the SPSS, often in the dead of night, while it is travelling at up to ten knots. The teams must then risk their lives to apprehend the traffickers and seize the drugs aboard the SPSS.

And the drug traffickers know the law. They know that the Coast Guard must obtain evidence of drugs so they will often scuttle the

vessel and jump overboard—turning a criminal apprehension into a rescue mission.

This legislation removes this dangerous hurdle. By prohibiting the possession of SPSS vessels without nationality, we protect the safety of these Coast Guard teams while ensuring swift prosecution of the cocaine traffickers.

I wish to commend my colleagues, Mr. LUNGREN and Mr. POE, for championing this important issue.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. CONYERS. 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 Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 3598.

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. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PROTECTING COURT OFFICIALS OFF SUPREME COURT GROUNDS

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 3296) to extend the authority of the United States Supreme Court Police to protect court officials off the Supreme Court Grounds and change the title of the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 3296

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

SECTION 1. UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT POLICE AND COUNSELOR TO THE CHIEF JUSTICE.

(a) EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY OF THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT POLICE TO PROTECT COURT OFFICIALS OFF THE SUPREME COURT GROUNDS.—Section 6121(b)(2) of title 40, United States Code, is amended by striking ''2008'' and inserting ''2013''.

(b) COUNSELOR TO THE CHIEF JUSTICE.—

(1) OFFICE OF FEDERAL JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION.—Section 133(b)(2) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking ''administrative assistant'' and inserting ''Counselor''.

(2) JUDICIAL OFFICIAL.—Section 376(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)(E), by striking ''an administrative assistant'' and inserting ''a Counselor''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(E), by striking ''an administrative assistant'' and inserting ''a Counselor''.

(3) ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE CHIEF JUSTICE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Section 677 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(i) in the section heading, by striking ''**Administrative Assistant**'' and inserting ''**Counselor**'';

(ii) in subsection (a)—

(I) in the first sentence, by striking ''an Administrative Assistant'' and inserting ''a Counselor''; and

(II) in the second and third sentences, by striking ''Administrative Assistant'' each place that term appears and inserting ''Counselor''; and

(iii) in subsections (b) and (c), by striking ''Administrative Assistant'' each place that term appears and inserting ''Counselor''.

(B) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections for chapter 45 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 677 and inserting the following:

''677. Counselor to the Chief Justice.''.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON ACCEPTANCE OF HONORARY CLUB MEMBERSHIPS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) GIFT.—The term ''gift'' has the meaning given under section 109(5) of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(2) JUDICIAL OFFICER.—The term ''judicial officer'' has the meaning given under section 109(10) of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(b) PROHIBITION ON ACCEPTANCE OF HONORARY CLUB MEMBERSHIPS.—A judicial officer may not accept a gift of an honorary club membership with a value of more than $50 in any calendar year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 days 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 Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in this case, the title accurately describes the contents of the bill. It attempts and proposes to extend the authority of the United States Supreme Court Police to protect court officials off the Supreme Court grounds and changes the title of the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice.

Congress has given the Supreme Court Police statutory recognition since 1982, with authority to patrol the Supreme Court buildings and grounds, make arrests, carry firearms, and protect the Chief Justice, any Associate Justice, official guests, and employees of the Court while performing official duties.

The Supreme Court Police are also authorized to protect the Justices and employees of the Court while they are away from the Court building, anywhere in the United States. We have extended this authority on several occasions, and this bill does so again, so that it will not expire at the end of this year.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, so that the Supreme Court Police can continue to perform their critical mission effectively.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is very similar to the legislation we passed in the House a week ago, H.R. 6855.

The bill addresses an issue affecting the safety of the Justices and other officials who work at the United States Supreme Court.

First, the legislation extends the authority of the U.S. Supreme Court Police to protect Court officials off the Supreme Court grounds through 2013. The current authorization expires on December 29, 2008.

This provision is necessary and noncontroversial. Congress created the original authority in 1982 and has renewed it regularly. The last authorization was 4 years ago.

Failure to extend the authority places the Justices and other Supreme Court employees and officers at risk. In light of heightened security threats, it is vital that the Supreme Court Police be empowered to carry out this service without interruption. In fact, Justice Souter was attacked off grounds while jogging in May 2004, the same year we last extended the authority.

As with previous authorizations, it is contemplated that the authority extends to the immediate area in the District and surrounding environs. The Marshall Service would provide protection to the Justices when they speak or travel out of the D.C.-Virginia-Maryland metropolitan region.

Finally, the legislation prohibits Federal judges from accepting honorary memberships to clubs that are valued in excess of $50. The last item is the only distinction between S. 3296 and the House bill.

Mr. Speaker, S. 3296 acknowledges an unfortunate but realistic problem: sometimes the Justices must be protected off Supreme Court grounds. This is a legislative exercise that the Congress has regularly undertaken on behalf of the Court since 1982.

I urge the Members to support the bill.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 3296, a bill to extend the authority of the United States Supreme Court Police to protect court officials of the Supreme Court grounds and change the title of the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice. This bill makes sense and it should be supported. I urge my colleagues to support this very important bill.

Four years ago, Supreme Court Justice David Souter was assaulted by two men while jogging near his home. While this attack was deemed only a random assault, this should serve as a wake-up call for us all. The Supreme Court, like the Office of the President, is more important than the person serving in the position. Protecting them, isn't just about protecting the person, it's about protecting the sanctity of the court.

Edmund Burke said that "Good order is the foundation of all things." To keep this order, we much protect those who provide that order. As this country becomes more and more partisan, we risk that the more extreme factors in our society will lash out and circumvent the system by focusing their anger at the officers of the court. Already the court is coming under increased attack from both sides of the aisle as being "activist."

This bill does something fundamental for the American way of life, it protects it. The legacy