

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 720) to improve intergovernmental planning for and communication during security incidents at domestic airports, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 411, nays 1, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 70]

YEAS—411

Abraham	Cook	Green, Al
Adams	Cooper	Green, Gene
Aderholt	Costa	Griffith
Aguilar	Costello (PA)	Grijalva
Allen	Courtney	Grothman
Amash	Cramer	Guinta
Amodei	Crawford	Guthrie
Ashford	Crenshaw	Hahn
Babin	Crowley	Hanna
Barletta	Cuellar	Hardy
Barr	Culberson	Harper
Barton	Cummings	Harris
Bass	Curbelo (FL)	Hartzler
Beatty	Davis (CA)	Hastings
Becerra	Davis, Danny	Heck (NV)
Benishkek	Davis, Rodney	Heck (WA)
Bera	DeFazio	Hensarling
Beyer	DeGette	Herrera Beutler
Billakis	Delaney	Hice (GA)
Bishop (GA)	DeLauro	Higgins
Bishop (MI)	DelBene	Hill
Bishop (UT)	Denham	Himes
Black	Dent	Hinojosa
Blackburn	DeSantis	Holding
Blum	DeSaulnier	Honda
Blumenauer	DesJarlais	Hoyer
Bonamici	Deutch	Hudson
Bost	Dingell	Huelskamp
Boustany	Doggett	Huffman
Boyle (PA)	Dold	Huizenga (MI)
Brady (PA)	Doyle (PA)	Hultgren
Brady (TX)	Duffy	Hunter
Brat	Duncan (SC)	Hurd (TX)
Bridenstine	Duncan (TN)	Hurt (VA)
Brooks (AL)	Edwards	Israel
Brooks (IN)	Ellison	Issa
Brown (FL)	Ellmers	Jackson Lee
Brownley (CA)	Emmer	Jeffries
Buchanan	Engel	Jenkins (KS)
Buck	Eshoo	Jenkins (WV)
Bucshon	Esty	Johnson (GA)
Burgess	Farenthold	Johnson (OH)
Bustos	Farr	Johnson, E. B.
Butterfield	Fattah	Johnson, Sam
Byrne	Fincher	Jolly
Calvert	Fitzpatrick	Jones
Capuano	Fleischmann	Jordan
Cárdenas	Fleming	Joyce
Carney	Flores	Kaptur
Carson (IN)	Forbes	Katko
Carter (GA)	Fortenberry	Keating
Carter (TX)	Foster	Kelly (IL)
Castor (FL)	Fox	Kelly (PA)
Castro (TX)	Frankel (FL)	Kennedy
Chabot	Franks (AZ)	Kildee
Chaffetz	Frelinghuysen	Kilmer
Chu (CA)	Fudge	Kind
Cicilline	Gabbard	King (IA)
Clark (MA)	Gallego	King (NY)
Clarke (NY)	Garamendi	Kinzinger (IL)
Clawson (FL)	Garrett	Kirkpatrick
Clay	Gibbs	Kline
Cleaver	Gibson	Knight
Clyburn	Gohmert	Kuster
Coffman	Goodlatte	LaMalfa
Cohen	Gowdy	Lamborn
Cole	Graham	Lance
Collins (NY)	Granger	Langevin
Comstock	Graves (GA)	Larsen (WA)
Conaway	Graves (LA)	Larson (CT)
Connolly	Graves (MO)	Latta
Conyers	Grayson	Lawrence

Levin	Pascrell	Shuster
Lewis	Paulsen	Simpson
Lieu (CA)	Payne	Sinema
Lipinski	Pearce	Sires
LoBiondo	Pelosi	Slaughter
Loeb sack	Perlmutter	Smith (MO)
Lofgren	Perry	Smith (NJ)
Long	Peters	Smith (TX)
Loudermilk	Peterson	Smith (WA)
Love	Pingree	Speier
Lowenthal	Pittenger	Stefanik
Lowe	Pitts	Stivers
Lucas	Pocan	Stutzman
Luetkemeyer	Poe (TX)	Swalwell (CA)
Lujan, Ben Ray	Poliquin	Takai
(NM)	Polis	Takano
Lummis	Pompeo	Thompson (CA)
Lynch	Posey	Thompson (MS)
MacArthur	Price (GA)	Thompson (PA)
Maloney,	Price (NC)	Thornberry
Carolyn	Quigley	Tiberi
Maloney, Sean	Rangel	Tipton
Marchant	Ratcliffe	Titus
Marino	Reed	Tonko
Massie	Reichert	Torres
Matsui	Renacci	Trott
McCarthy	Ribble	Tsongas
McCaul	Rice (NY)	Turner
McClintock	Rice (SC)	Upton
McCollum	Richmond	Valadao
McDermott	Rigell	Van Hollen
McGovern	Roby	Vargas
McHenry	Rogers (AL)	Veasey
McKinley	Rogers (KY)	Vela
McMorris	Rohrabacher	Velázquez
Rodgers	Rokita	Visclosky
McNerney	Rooney (FL)	Wagner
McSally	Ros-Lehtinen	Walberg
Meadows	Roskam	Walden
Meehan	Ross	Walker
Meeks	Rothfus	Walorski
Meng	Rouzer	Walters, Mimi
Messer	Roybal-Allard	Walz
Mica	Royce	Wasserman
Miller (FL)	Ruppersberger	Schultz
Miller (MI)	Rush	Waters, Maxine
Moolenaar	Russell	Watson Coleman
Mooney (WV)	Ryan (OH)	Weber (TX)
Moore	Ryan (WI)	Webster (FL)
Moulton	Salmon	Wenstrup
Mullin	Sánchez, Linda	Westerman
Mulvaney	T.	Westmoreland
Murphy (PA)	Sarbanes	Whitfield
Nadler	Scalise	Williams
Napolitano	Schakowsky	Wilson (FL)
Neal	Schiff	Wilson (SC)
Neugebauer	Schock	Wittman
Newhouse	Schrader	Womack
Nolan	Schweikert	Yarmuth
Norcross	Scott (VA)	Yoder
Nugent	Scott, Austin	Yoho
Nunes	Scott, David	Young (AK)
O'Rourke	Serrano	Young (IA)
Olson	Sessions	Young (IN)
Palazzo	Sewell (AL)	Zeldin
Pallone	Sherman	Zinke
Palmer	Shinkus	

NAYS—1

Sensenbrenner

NOT VOTING—20

Capps	Labrador	Ruiz
Cartwright	Lee	Sanchez, Loretta
Collins (GA)	Lujan Grisham	Sanford
Diaz-Balart	(NM)	Smith (NE)
Duckworth	Murphy (FL)	Stewart
Gosar	Noem	Welch
Gutiérrez	Roe (TN)	Woodall

□ 1906

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I was delayed for votes on Tuesday, February 10, 2015, as the train I was on ended up being delayed by two and a half hours, and as a consequence, I arrived half an hour late and missed votes. Had I been present, I would have voted in the

following manner: H.R. 719—TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act—vote: “yes.” H.R. 720—Gerardo Hernandez Airport Security Act—vote: “yes.”

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S. 1, KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE APPROVAL ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 16, 2015, THROUGH FEBRUARY 23, 2015

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114-22) on the resolution (H. Res. 100) providing for consideration of the bill (S. 1) to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline, and providing for proceedings during the period from February 16, 2015, through February 23, 2015, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 644, FIGHTING HUNGER INCENTIVE ACT OF 2015, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 636, AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESS TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2015

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114-23) on the resolution (H. Res. 101) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 644) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend and expand the charitable deduction for contributions of food inventory, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 636) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend increased expensing limitations, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ESSENTIAL TRANSPORTATION WORKER IDENTIFICATION CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT ACT

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 710) to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to prepare a comprehensive security assessment of the transportation security card program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 710

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 “Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act”.

SEC. 2. COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY ASSESSMENT OF THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY CARD PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Transportation and

Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Comptroller General of the United States a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the transportation security card program under section 70105 of title 46, United States Code, at enhancing security and reducing security risks for facilities and vessels regulated pursuant to section 102 of Public Law 107-295. Such assessment shall be conducted by a national laboratory that, to the extent practicable, is within the Department of Homeland Security laboratory network with expertise in maritime security or by a maritime security university-based center within the Department of Homeland Security centers of excellence network.

(b) **CONTENTS.**—The comprehensive assessment shall include—

(1) an evaluation of the extent to which the program, as implemented, addresses known or likely security risks in the maritime environment;

(2) an evaluation of the extent to which deficiencies identified by the Comptroller General have been addressed; and

(3) a cost-benefit analysis of the program, as implemented.

(c) **CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN; PROGRAM REFORMS.**—Not later than 60 days after the Secretary submits the assessment under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit a corrective action plan to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate that responds to the assessment under subsection (b). The corrective action plan shall include an implementation plan with benchmarks, may include programmatic reforms, revisions to regulations, or proposals for legislation, and shall be considered in any rule making by the Department relating to the transportation security card program.

(d) **COMPTROLLER GENERAL REVIEW.**—Not later than 120 days after the Secretary issues the corrective action plan under subsection (c), the Comptroller General shall—

(1) review the extent to which such plan implements—

(A) recommendations issued by the national laboratory or maritime security university-based center, as applicable, in the assessment submitted under subsection (a); and

(B) recommendations issued by the Comptroller General before the enactment of this Act; and

(2) inform the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate as to the responsiveness of such plan to such recommendations.

(e) **TRANSPORTATION SECURITY CARD READER RULE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Homeland Security may not issue a final rule requiring the use of transportation security card readers until—

(A) the Comptroller General informs the Committees on Homeland Security and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and Commerce, Science and Transportation of the Senate that the submission under subsection (a) is responsive to the recommendations of the Comptroller General; and

(B) the Secretary issues an updated list of transportation security card readers that are compatible with active transportation security cards.

(2) **LIMITATION ON APPLICATION.**—Paragraph (1) shall not apply with respect to any final

rule issued pursuant to the notice of proposed rulemaking on Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC)-Reader Requirements published by the Coast Guard on March 22, 2013 (78 Fed. Reg. 17781)

(f) **COMPTROLLER GENERAL OVERSIGHT.**—Not less than 18 months after the date of the issuance of the corrective action plan under subsection (c), and every six months thereafter during the 3-year period following the date of the issuance of the first report under this subsection, the Comptroller General shall report to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate regarding implementation of the corrective action plan.

SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act and the amendments made by this Act, and this Act and such amendments shall be carried out using amounts otherwise available for such purpose.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any 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. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 710, the Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act.

First, I would like to thank the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for reintroducing this thoughtful legislation and the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) for her leadership in moving it through her subcommittee last Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation calls for a security assessment to determine the efficacy of the Transportation Worker Identification Credential, commonly known as the TWIC program. This bill will help Congress better determine the value of the TWIC program and simultaneously allow the Department to proceed with finalizing the long-awaited card reader rule.

I support this bill under consideration on the floor today because it responds to a key recommendation of the Government Accountability Office that the TWIC program should have a baseline security assessment before the program moves forward.

I have several thriving ports in my district, such as Savannah, Brunswick, and Kings Bay. As many of my colleagues who also have ports in their districts know, TWIC is a port security

program that has been wrought with constant delays and questions about its overall security value.

Last Congress, the Border and Maritime Subcommittee held a hearing with the Coast Guard, TSA, and GAO on the TWIC program and the ongoing concerns therein, and this legislation is a result of that strong oversight.

It may be hard to believe, but more than a decade after the legislation that required TWIC was first enacted, there has been no security or effectiveness assessment of the program to assess the underlying assumptions of the security and access control concerns the card was intended to mitigate.

This bill seeks to answer the simple question: How, if at all, does TWIC improve maritime security? This should have been one of the very first things the Department did when it began to implement this program, and this bill ensures it is done.

The TWIC card was initially designed to prevent terrorists from gaining access to sensitive parts of our Nation's ports through the use of biometric-enabled credentials. However, with no biometric reader regulations in place, the TWIC card is currently used as a flash pass since most facilities and vessels are neither currently required to nor voluntarily utilize biometric readers. The lack of biometric readers, therefore, limits the effectiveness of this program.

For several years, members of the Homeland Security Committee have been calling on the Department to release the card reader rule to provide some certainty to workers and industry.

□ 1915

The final rule to require TWIC readers to be used at the riskiest 5 percent of all TWIC-regulated vessels and facilities has not been issued. The notice of proposed rulemaking was posted almost 2 years ago which was nearly 6 years after workers were first required to pay for and obtain a TWIC card.

The delays are so significant that workers have already had to renew their biometric credentials in the time it has taken to issue regulations on credential readers to actually utilize the biometric-enabled technology. This is absurd.

While we all agree there is much room for improvement with the TWIC program, putting it on hold for several more years would do more harm than good. The business community has been preparing for this TWIC rule for several years.

This bill would give them certainty about the requirements of the TWIC program. It also allows the Coast Guard and TSA to continue their efforts to deliver the port security program Congress expected years ago.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 710 requires the GAO to perform consistent reviews of the TWIC program and to follow the changes the Department makes as a result of the required assessment. This added level of review

will provide Congress with progress updates for future legislative action.

The proposed rule and open GAO recommendations lead to some very basic questions about mitigating threat, risk, and vulnerability at our Nation's ports and how the TWIC program should be used effectively to prevent a potential terrorist attack.

We have an obligation, Mr. Speaker, to get this right. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 710, and I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, February 5, 2015.

Hon. MICHAEL T. McCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN McCAUL: I write concerning H.R. 710, the Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act. This legislation includes matters that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

In order to expedite floor consideration of H.R. 710, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forgo action on this bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that forgoing consideration of the bill does not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. I request you urge the Speaker to name members of the Committee to any conference committee named to consider such provisions.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, February 5, 2015.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 710, the "Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act." I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Homeland Security concurs with the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of this bill at this time, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill on the House floor. I thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. McCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 710, the

Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend from Georgia for his concern and for his commitment and thank him for his service on the Homeland Security Committee. I also want to acknowledge our chairman and our ranking member of the full committee and Mrs. MILLER who now serves as the chairwoman of the Border and Maritime Security, on which I served as the ranking member in the last Congress.

The bill passed the House unanimously in the 113th Congress, and I am pleased it is being considered by the House again today. Mr. Speaker, might I add my appreciation to the House leadership, in particular the Speaker; majority leader; and, of course, our leader and minority whip.

The SAFE Port Act of 2006 directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to implement a biometric credential program, now known as the TWIC program, to ensure that individuals with unescorted access to secure areas of ports and vessels were vetted and carrying proper credentials.

Mr. Speaker, I had a TWIC card. I remember being there as the TWIC card was being implemented and watching various workers come to a central point and sign up for the TWIC card. We had great hope and inspiration on that TWIC card.

Establishment of this program was viewed as critical to ensuring protection of our ports from a so-called insider security threat; however, in the years since it was established, the Department of Homeland Security struggled to realize the security benefits that Congress envisioned.

I know that the former director of the Transportation Security Administration, Mr. Pistole, was very concerned. It should be noted their efforts are an important part of their work, along with others.

In fact, the Government Accountability Office has examined the program and identified serious shortcomings that may undermine the program's intended purpose and make it difficult to justify the program's costs and particularly the costs to workers. I saw that firsthand. I also saw the challenges of workers who had many unique scheduling for their work hours to be able to get a TWIC card.

In response, I introduced H.R. 710 and its predecessor last Congress with the support of Subcommittee Chairman MILLER as an original cosponsor to ensure that Congress receives an independent, scientific assessment of the program and to require the Secretary to issue a corrective action plan in response to the assessment.

Ranking Member THOMPSON is also a cosponsor, but this is bipartisan legislation. The required assessment should give Congress the information it needs to determine how best to proceed with the TWIC program.

The bill has been refined over time to ensure that the long overdue rule-making for TWIC card readers would not be affected by the bill and to refine the scope of the assessment we are seeking.

There is great interest in that final rule; particularly, there is interest in how many ports and vessels will be required to install readers for biometric cards. If the final rule requires only a limited number of vessels and ports to have biometric readers, as has been previously proposed by the Department, we will still—we will still—certainly need to have a discussion about what this means for the approximately 2 million truckers, longshoremen, and port workers who today carry TWICs as part of their jobs.

For those of us who live around and near our ports, such as the Houston port, we know that this will have a great impact.

In closing, I again thank my friend for his concern and presence here on the floor today and in support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make the point that this bill was generated by the GAO report which found a number of concerns, and I just want to mention one or two. The reliability of data collection retention was done in an incomplete and inconsistent manner, this report wanted to inform us of—this was a GAO TWIC report—and it commented on some of the illnesses or ailments of this process.

It reported that transaction data did not match underlying documentation, installed TWIC readers and access control systems could not collect required data on TWIC reader use, and TSA and the independent test agent did not employ effective compensating data collection measures.

Also, pilot participants did not document instances of denied access. Finally, TSA and the independent test agent did not collect complete data on malfunctioning TWIC cards.

This legislation, the underlying legislation, H.R. 710, is to be a helper. It is to help correct our path to make the document, the TWIC card that all of us are quite familiar with, the best effective data-collecting document and system that it can possibly be.

I am very grateful that, again, my colleagues on the Homeland Security Committee have supported this legislation, and I ask my colleagues to join us in making what is good much better and best to be able to secure the Nation and provide for the homeland.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of my bill, H.R. 710, the "Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act."

This bill passed the House unanimously in the 113th Congress and I am pleased it is being considered by the House again today.

The SAFE Port Act of 2006 directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to implement a biometric credential program, now known as the TWIC program, to ensure that individuals with unescorted access to secure areas of

ports and vessels were vetted and carrying proper credentials.

Establishment of this program was viewed as critical to ensuring the protection of our ports from a so-called "insider security threat."

However, in the years since it was established, the Department of Homeland Security struggled to realize the security benefits that Congress envisioned.

In fact, the Government Accountability Office has examined the program and identified serious shortcomings that may undermine the program's intended purpose and make it difficult to justify program costs, and particularly the costs to workers.

In response, I introduced H.R. 710 and its predecessor last Congress, with the support of Subcommittee Chairman MILLER as an original cosponsor, to ensure that Congress receives an independent scientific assessment of the program and to require the Secretary to issue a corrective action plan in response to the assessment.

The required assessment should give Congress the information it needs to determine how best to proceed with the TWIC program.

The bill has been refined over time to ensure that the long-overdue rulemaking for TWIC card readers would not be affected by the bill and to refine the scope of the assessment we are seeking.

There is great interest in that final rule, particularly there is interest in how many ports and vessels will be required to install readers for biometric cards.

If the final rule requires only a limited number of vessels and ports to have biometric readers, as has been previously proposed by the Department, we will certainly need to have a discussion about what this means for the approximately 2 million truckers, longshoremen and port workers who today carry TWICs as part of their jobs.

In closing, I want to express my appreciation to Chairman MILLER for the bipartisan nature of the work on this bill and express my appreciation to her staff for their cooperation.

I am proud to represent a portion of the Port of Houston and know firsthand the importance of this issue to the maritime workers, truckers, and others who access our Nation's ports every day. It is imperative that we get this right on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 710, a bipartisan bill that is essential to ensuring that the Department of Homeland Security has an effective program in place to help secure our ports.

Identical legislation that I authored was approved unanimously last Congress. Today, with this legislation, we have the opportunity to send another strong message to the Department.

Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, the Ranking Member of the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, and the author of the legislation, I rise in strong and enthusiastic support of H.R. 710, the "Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act."

H.R. 710 is identical in all substantive respects to H.R. 3202, which passed the House during the 113th Congress on July 28, 2014.

The Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act directs the Secretary of Homeland Security (DHS) to submit to Congress and the Comptroller General

(GAO) a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the transportation security card program at enhancing security or reducing security risks for maritime facilities and vessels.

I reintroduced H.R. 710, in response to this GAO TWIC Report on the Weaknesses in the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Reader Pilot program that impacted the accuracy, and reliability of the system.

The GAO report stated that data collection and retention was done in an incomplete and inconsistent manner during the pilot, further undermining the completeness, accuracy, and reliability of the data collected at pilot sites.

Problems identified included by the GAO report included:

1. Installed TWIC readers and access control systems could not collect required data on TWIC reader use, and TSA and the independent test agent did not employ effective compensating data collection measures.

2. Reported transaction data did not match underlying documentation.

3. Pilot documentation did not contain complete TWIC reader and access control system characteristics.

4. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the independent test agent did not record clear baseline data for comparing operational performance at access points with TWIC readers.

5. TSA and the independent test agent did not collect complete data on malfunctioning TWIC cards.

6. Pilot participants did not document instances of denied access.

7. TSA and the independent test agent did not collect consistent data on the operational impact of using TWIC cards with readers.

8. Pilot site reports did not contain complete information about installed TWIC readers' and access control systems' design.

H.R. 710 addresses the problems outlined in the GAO report by directing the Secretary to issue a corrective action plan based on the assessment that responds to the findings of a cost-benefit analysis of the program and enhances security or reduces security risk for such facilities and vessels.

Following the assessment the Comptroller General, within 120 days must review the extent to which the submissions implement certain recommendations issued by the Comptroller General, and inform Congress as to the responsiveness of the submission.

The bill also prohibits the Secretary from issuing a final rule requiring the use of transportation security card readers until the Comptroller General informs Congress that the submission is substantially responsive to the GAO recommendations, and the Secretary issues an updated list of transportation security card readers that are compatible with active transportation security cards.

Mr. Speaker, my congressional district is located in Houston, Texas, which is home to the Port of Houston, one of the world's busiest ports, and one of its most critical infrastructure projects.

According to the Department of Commerce in 2012, Texas exports totaled \$265 billion.

The Port of Houston is a 25-mile-long complex of diversified public and private facilities located just a few hours' sailing time from the Gulf of Mexico.

In 2012, ship channel-related businesses contribute 1,026,820 jobs and generate more than \$178.5 billion in statewide economic impact.

For the past 11 consecutive years, Texas has outpaced the rest of the nation's ports in exports and ranked: 1. 1st in foreign tonnage; 2. 2nd in total tonnage; and 3. 7th in container ports by total TEUs in 2012.

The Port of Houston is the largest Texas port with 46% of market share by tonnage and the largest Texas container port with 96% market share in containers by total TEUs in 2012.

It is the largest Gulf Coast container port, handling 67% of Gulf Coast container traffic in 2012 and ranked 2nd in terms of cargo value (based on CBP Customs port definitions).

The Government Accountability Office (GAO), reports that the Port of Houston, its waterways, and vessels are part of an economic engine handling more than \$700 billion in merchandise annually.

The Port of Houston houses approximately 100 steamship lines offering services that link Houston with 1,053 ports in 203 countries.

The Port of Houston hosts a \$15 billion petrochemical complex, the largest in the nation and second largest worldwide.

The Port of Houston petrochemical complex supplies over 40 percent of the nation's base petrochemical manufacturing capacity.

What happens at the Port of Houston affects the entire nation.

When Congress enacted the SAFE Ports Act in 2006, we directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to implement a biometric credential program to ensure that individuals with unescorted access to sensitive areas in ports and vessels were vetted and known.

However, under the Homeland Security Committee's oversight responsibilities we learned that, as implemented by TSA and the Coast Guard, there are weaknesses in the program.

For this reason, I introduced H.R. 710, with the support of Mr. THOMPSON, the Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member, and Mrs. MILLER, Chair of the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee as original cosponsors, to ensure that Congress receives an independent scientific assessment of the program and to require the Secretary to issue a corrective action plan in response to the assessment.

The required assessment should give Congress the information it needs to determine how best to proceed with the program.

I want to point out that in the last Congress when this bill was marked up in Committee, language was integrated to ensure that clarified that pending rulemaking would not be impacted by the bill and refined the scope of the assessment we are seeking.

H.R. 710 retains this language.

The Department has said that the final rule for biometric readers will be published in January 2015.

There is great interest in the Department's final rule for biometric readers, particularly as it relates to the number of ports and vessels that will be required to install readers for biometric cards.

If the final rule requires only a limited number of vessels and ports to have biometric readers, as has been previously proposed by the Department, we will certainly need to have a discussion about what this means for the approximately 2 million truckers, longshoremen and port workers who today are required to carry biometric cards to do their jobs.

I want to express my appreciation to Chairman MILLER for the bipartisan nature of the

work on this and all the bills that originate in her Subcommittee and thank her and the Committee staff for their cooperation and assistance in shepherding this vital legislation to the floor.

I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to strongly support this bipartisan bill.

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Texas for her leadership in this very important issue.

Once again, I want to urge all of my colleagues to support this strong, bipartisan piece of legislation, and 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. CARTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 710.

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.

THE FIGHTING HUNGER INCENTIVE ACT

(Mr. YOUNG of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of H.R. 644, which promotes charitable giving. Think about this: one in eight Iowans struggle to find food, and one in five Iowa children don't have enough to eat. Iowa and our country face a very real challenge here that we cannot ignore.

Mr. Speaker, this week, we will be considering H.R. 644, the Fighting Hunger Incentive Act. H.R. 644 is good for families who give, and it is good for the families they serve. It is a common-sense solution that all my colleagues should support.

This bill would permanently update the Tax Code to provide for enhanced deductions for food inventory donations. We have great food banks across the Hawkeye State, but they are always in need of food inventory.

Let's pass H.R. 644. It makes giving less expensive, and it makes more businesses and families eligible for the credit so that we can empower those who can make a difference.

DIPLOMATIC PROTOCOLS

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the planned upcoming speech before Congress by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been mishandled from the start. It is being brought forward in a manner that is in total contravention of important diplomatic protocols that exist to support America's strategic interests and, frankly, Israel's.

Mr. Speaker, this speech was agreed to unilaterally by the Republican Speaker of this House. He provided no courtesy nor prior notification to the executive branch, as is the standard course of protocol with foreign leaders.

This is a fundamental violation of our national unity on foreign policy. Our Constitution assigns the office of the President the right and responsibility to negotiate with foreign governments.

To circumvent this imperative and to invite a sitting head of state with no notification to the executive branch does harm to our national interests and our standing throughout the world.

At this time, while our executive branch is pursuing sensitive and promising nuclear negotiations with Iran, why would our Speaker behave so cavalierly? Shouldn't our Nation's executive and legislative branches be unified in matters of foreign policy with such grave ramifications beyond our shores?

As this pending visit comes 2 weeks before the Israeli elections, it appears that our Congress will be used as a campaign backstop and backdrop for Israeli election politics. How unfortunate and how wantonly crass and insulting to this Congress and the Constitution we are all sworn to uphold.

"ALLEGIANCE"

(Mr. TAKAI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TAKAI. Aloha, Mr. Speaker. As a fourth-generation Japanese American, it is with special pride today that I announce a historic moment, the first time a play about the World War II internment of Japanese Americans has made it to Broadway.

Music and lyrics are by Jay Kuo, with a book by Marc Acito. The musical is called "Allegiance," and actor George Takei and all of the artists, producers, and supporters of "Allegiance" deserve congratulations. They are getting this still little-known story about the internment of Japanese Americans told in a high profile and exciting way.

"Allegiance" is inspired by Mr. Takei's experiences when he and his family were interned during World War II. The play is a tribute to his parents, as well as the more than 110,000 other people of Japanese ancestry who were subjected to forced relocation and incarceration.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to see and support "Allegiance." This production will raise awareness of injustices of that time, and it is a reminder of how much work remains to ensure equal rights and treatment for all.

UKRAINE

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the President to send defensive weapons to the beleaguered people of Ukraine. I just came back from a meeting in Europe with the President of Ukraine, Mr. Poroshenko, who pleaded with us that he needs help. The world cannot stand idly by and allow Putin Russian aggression to continue without giving the Ukrainians a chance to defend themselves.

I know that there are meetings and negotiations going on this week in Minsk, and I know that the leaders of France and Germany want to see if they can again put together some kind of an agreement before any weapons are given, but there was a Minsk agreement several months ago only to be broken by Mr. Putin, and the Ukrainians need help now.

As Mr. Poroshenko said when he addressed the joint session of Congress:

Thank you for the blankets, but blankets don't allow us to defend ourselves.

The Ukrainians are asking for anti-tank weapons, armored Humvees, longer-range counterartillery radars, drones, and additional advanced radios. We just would give them the ability to defend themselves.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't involve U.S. military. It doesn't involve U.S. troops. How much longer can we watch the beleaguered people of Ukraine in siege? The United States should take moves and should take moves now. Send Ukraine these defensive weapons.

□ 1930

VACCINES SAVE LIVES

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, just yesterday I joined my public school system, my director of the city health department, and a number of health professionals to again remind parents and others around the Nation, and really to remind now, as I speak, my colleagues, vaccines save; and to be able to emphasize in the backdrop of this outbreak of measles, starting first with 7 States and 114 cases coming out of the case in Disney, and then now 17 States with 121 cases, to recognize the importance of research and responding to infectious disease.

We understand measles. We understand the science of it. We know that we can protect people against it. We know when they should get a booster and what age a child should begin their first shots, certainly after 1 year old. We understand that an 8-month-old is in jeopardy if he or she is exposed, as is someone with low immunity. We also know that the measles vaccine has worked, and it has been effective.

I want to thank the Centers for Disease Control. In a conference call, they indicated that they are going to make new efforts to work with various health facilities and health entities