

Specifically, H.R. 2786 requires the CBP to report on the following matters related to homeland security:

- the number of high-risk rail shipments annually entering the country;
- the status of radiation detection units at each border rail crossing; and
- an assessment of whether additional radiation detection equipment is necessary.

The bill also requires CBP to develop a plan for ensuring that all relevant CBP personnel receive adequate training and guidance on the proper use of CBP's Automated Targeting System for such shipments, and in the use of appropriate radiation detection equipment for shipment examination, and requirements for recording examination results.

H.R. 2786 bill also requires the General Accountability Office to periodically audit CBP operations at rail crossings on borders to ensure rail shipments are targeted, examined, and the examination results are well documented.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is good for our nation and for my congressional district, which is centered in Houston, Texas.

Houston has been the hub of railroad hub of Texas since the 1880s and is known as the place "where 17 railroads meet the sea."

It is also the "the energy capital of the world."

Freight from the Houston area goes by railroad to destinations all over the United States, including Los Angeles, Long Beach, New York City, Charleston, and Savannah.

Over 1 billion tons of freight travels through Houston area each year; no other state comes close to the level of trade the metropolitan Houston region experiences.

One billion tons of freight leaves the Houston area each year, nearly two-thirds of which (645 million tons) involve goods come from foreign sources.

The top foreign freight origination point for the City of Houston is Mexico.

Mexico supplies over 50% of all international freight in the Houston area.

Europe and Canada are Houston's second largest foreign freight trading partners, accounting for over 27% of international freight in the Houston area.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in supporting H.R. 2786 because the safety of rail transit is critical to the security of the homeland and strength of our economy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2786.

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. VELA. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

BORDER JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2015

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2835) to actively recruit members

of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service to serve as Customs and Border Protection officers, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2835

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 "Border Jobs for Veterans Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Customs and Border Protection officers at United States ports of entry carry out critical law enforcement duties associated with screening foreign visitors, returning United States citizens, and imported cargo entering the United States.

(2) It is in the national interest for United States ports of entry to be adequately staffed with Customs and Border Protection officers in a timely fashion, including meeting the congressionally funded staffing target of 23,775 officers for fiscal year 2015.

(3) An estimated 250,000 to 300,000 members of the Armed Forces separate from military service every year.

(4) Recruiting efforts and expedited hiring procedures must be enhanced to ensure that individuals separating from military service are aware of, and partake in, opportunities to fill vacant Customs and Border Protection officer positions.

SEC. 3. EXPEDITED HIRING OF APPROPRIATE SEPARATING SERVICE MEMBERS.

The Secretary of Homeland Security shall consider the expedited hiring of qualified candidates who have the ability to perform the essential functions of the position of a Customs and Border Protection officer and who are eligible for a veterans recruitment appointment authorized under section 4214 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 4. ENHANCEMENTS TO EXISTING PROGRAMS TO RECRUIT SERVICE MEMBERS SEPARATING FROM MILITARY SERVICE FOR CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION OFFICER VACANCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, and acting through existing programs, authorities, and agreements, where applicable, shall enhance the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security to recruit members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service to serve as Customs and Border Protection officers.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The enhanced recruiting efforts under subsection (a) shall—

(1) include Customs and Border Protection officer opportunities in relevant job assistance efforts under the Transition Assistance Program;

(2) place U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials or other relevant Department of Homeland Security officials at recruiting events and jobs fairs involving members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service;

(3) provide opportunities for local U.S. Customs and Border Protection field offices to partner with military bases in the region;

(4) include outreach efforts to educate members of the Armed Forces with Military Occupational Specialty Codes and Officer Branches, Air Force Specialty Codes, Naval Enlisted Classifications and Officer Designators, and Coast Guard competencies that are transferable to the requirements, qualifications, and duties assigned to Customs and Border Protection officers of available hiring opportunities to become Customs and Border Protection officers;

(5) identify shared activities and opportunities for reciprocity related to steps in hiring Customs and Border Protection officers with the goal of minimizing the time required to hire qualified applicants;

(6) ensure the streamlined interagency transfer of relevant background investigations and security clearances; and

(7) include such other elements as may be necessary to ensure that members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service are aware of opportunities to fill vacant Customs and Border Protection officer positions.

SEC. 5. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and by December 31 of each of the next three years thereafter, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, shall submit a report to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate that includes a description and assessment of the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security to hire members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service as Customs and Border Protection officers under section 4.

(b) CONTENT.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) a detailed description of the efforts to implement section 4, including—

(A) elements of the enhanced recruiting efforts and the goals associated with such elements; and

(B) a description of how the elements and goals referred to in subparagraph (A) will assist in meeting statutorily mandated staffing levels and agency hiring benchmarks;

(2) a detailed description of the efforts that have been undertaken under section 4;

(3) the estimated number of separating service members made aware of Customs and Border Protection officer vacancies;

(4) the number of Customs and Border Protection officer vacancies filled with separating service members; and

(5) the number of Customs and Border Protection officer vacancies filled with separating service members under Veterans Recruitment Appointment authorized under section 4214 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 6. RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act may be construed—

(1) as superseding, altering, or amending existing Federal veterans' hiring preferences or Federal hiring authorities; or

(2) to authorize the appropriation of additional amounts to carry out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VELA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 2835, the Border Jobs for Veterans

Act of 2015. This bill, which I introduced in June, seeks to increase the hiring of military veterans for Customs and Border Protection officer positions vital to our security here at home.

The Border Jobs for Veterans Act addresses two critical priorities: ensuring full staffing at our ports of entry and helping separating servicemembers transition to civilian life.

My district includes over 80 miles of the U.S. border as well as several ports of entry. I visited our ports in Nogales and Douglas numerous times to hear about their operations firsthand and have seen the critical law enforcement duties carried out by CBP officers at these ports, such as screening visitors, returning U.S. citizens, and cargo entering the United States.

In June, the Port Authority chair for the Mariposa port of entry in Nogales, just outside my district, reported that, while staffing numbers have grown nationally, “staffing numbers at Nogales and the Tucson Sector have remained essentially stagnant in recent memory while demand continues to grow.”

The port also estimates that CBP’s Tucson field office is currently operating at a 20-percent staffing deficit. While new hires have occurred since then, CBP estimates the Tucson field office still needs to fill roughly 200 officer positions.

In my conversations with CBP officers, they have repeatedly told me that inadequate staffing levels hamper their ability to do their jobs. They cite problems with recruiting and retention of new officers as well as lengthy and cumbersome hiring process, including delays due to backlogs of the necessary background checks. After a recent reduction in that process by roughly 50 percent, it still takes 180 days to hire a new officer at ports where there is a strong need now.

These hurdles to hiring acts as an impediment to cross-border trade that powers both Arizona and the Nation’s economy. According to the Arizona-Mexico Commission, more than 41.6 billion dollars’ worth of trade flows through Arizona’s ports of entry, \$16 billion of which is attributed to bilateral trade with Mexico.

But inadequate staffing at these ports of entry slows the flow of trade coming across the border, costing businesses millions of dollars, and ultimately hurts our attractiveness as a transportation and trade hub, something we simply cannot afford.

Each year approximately 250,000 to 300,000 members of the Armed Forces separate from military service. I recently visited the Veterans One-Stop Center in Pima County in my district, which helps veterans find employment after they leave the military, and I listened to their challenges and their stories firsthand.

Who better to address this shortfall and help to secure our ports than the highly trained patriotic Americans who just recently separated from the Armed Forces?

That is why H.R. 2835 requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to work with the Department of Defense to enhance our efforts to recruit members of the military who are separating to serve as Customs and Border Protection officers.

These efforts must include participation in relevant job fairs, transition programs, partnerships between CBP field offices and local military bases, and the identification of ways to streamline the transfer of background checks and security clearances.

This bill offers the men and women of our military another opportunity to serve the Nation. All DHS has to do is make sure that they are aware of the opportunities available at our Nation’s 329 ports of entry.

I want to thank my colleagues, Senators FLAKE, MCCAIN, JOHNSON, and SCHUMER, and their staffs for working on the Senate companion legislation and their help on the text of this bill.

I also want to thank Chairman THORBERRY and his staff for working with us to move this bill forward.

I urge all Members to join me in supporting the Border Jobs for Veterans Act of 2015.

I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 25, 2015.

Hon. MICHAEL MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write concerning H.R. 2835, the Border Jobs for Veterans Act of 2015, which has been referred to the Committee on Armed Services. In order to expedite this legislation for floor consideration, the committee will forgo action on this bill.

The committee’s waiver is conditional on our mutual understanding that you will amend H.R. 2835 to reflect the changes agreed to by our staffs. 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 provisions contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the committee’s Rule X jurisdiction. I request that you urge the Speaker to appoint members of the committee to any conference committee convened to consider such provisions.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest into the committee report on H.R. 2835 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Sincerely,
WILLIAM M. “MAC” THORBERRY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, September 28, 2015.

Hon. MAC THORBERRY,
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THORBERRY: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2835, the “Border Jobs for Veterans Act of 2015.” I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the House Armed Services Committee will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Homeland Security concurs with the mutual understanding that the

language in the bill reflects the negotiations between our staffs and that by foregoing consideration of this bill at this time, the House Armed Services Committee 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 House Armed Services Committee 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.

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

I rise in strong support of H.R. 2835, the Border Jobs for Veterans Act of 2015.

First of all, I would like to thank my colleague, Congresswoman MCSALLY, for introducing this wonderful piece of legislation. It not only helps us expedite the flow of traffic in trade at our borders, but it also helps and assists with our veterans we all represent.

H.R. 2835, the Border Jobs for Veterans Act of 2015, would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to consider expediting the hiring of qualified veterans to serve as U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers.

The bill also authorizes DHS to enhance its efforts to recruit members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service to serve as CBP officers and requires DHS to report to Congress on its efforts.

Through their service, our Nation’s veterans have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to our country and its security. CBP would benefit greatly from their service within the agency’s ranks.

At the same time, expediting the hiring of qualified veterans could help alleviate the continued shortage of CBP officers at our ports of entry, helping to better secure our borders while facilitating legitimate trade and travel.

With that in mind, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2835, to facilitate the recruitment and hiring of America’s military veterans for new careers serving our country as U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2835.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2835, “Border Jobs for Veterans Act of 2015.” which would guarantee more jobs for our many deserving veterans.

This bill requires the Homeland Security Department to prioritize the hiring of U.S. veterans as Custom and Border Protection (CBP) officers.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the unemployment rate for our veterans is 7.2%, which is roughly 573,000 unemployed veterans nationally.

A study commissioned by the Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration found that in 2008, delays at POEs at the U.S.-Mexico border cost the U.S. economy 26,000 jobs, \$600 million in lost tax revenue, and \$5.8 billion in lost economic output.

According to CBP, 2,000 additional CBPOs will lead to the creation of approximately 66,000 new jobs and increase the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the U.S. by up to \$4 billion.

The bill will ensure that:

CBP officials will be at recruiting events and jobs fairs for armed service members; Partnerships are fostered between military bases in regions where CBP Officers work;

Opportunities for the expedited hiring of certain service members with qualifications needed by CBP are prioritized; and

Transfers of relevant background investigations and security clearances are streamlined to facilitate transitions from military life to employment at the CBP.

Mr. Speaker, I introduced H.R. 76, the "Helping to Encourage Real Opportunity for Veterans Transitioning from Battlespace to Workplace Act of 2015," the HEROS Act, which is very similar to spirit to the bill before the House.

Studies have shown that more than 80% of veterans transitioning from military service to the civilian sector regard employer-provided Veterans support programs as "critical" or "important" to their success.

The "HERO Transitioning from Battlespace to Workplace Act of 2014" addressed these problems by providing strong incentives for employers to hire, retain, and employ veterans in positions that take maximum advantage of their skills and experience.

Nearly 90% of veterans believe they have the general skills needed to land their ideal job such as problem solving, leadership, ethics, and time management and most believe they possess specific marketable skills, such as information technology, health care, mechanical, and aviation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2835, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

MANDATORY PRICE REPORTING ACT OF 2015

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2051) to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to extend the livestock mandatory price reporting requirements, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) *SHORT TITLE.*—This Act may be cited as the "Agriculture Reauthorizations Act of 2015".

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—MANDATORY PRICE REPORTING

Sec. 101. Extension of livestock mandatory reporting.

Sec. 102. Swine reporting.

Sec. 103. Lamb reporting.

Sec. 104. Study on livestock mandatory reporting.

TITLE II—NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION

Sec. 201. National Forest Foundation Act reauthorization.

TITLE III—UNITED STATES GRAIN STANDARDS ACT REAUTHORIZATION

Sec. 301. Reauthorization of United States Grain Standards Act.

Sec. 302. Report on disruption in Federal inspection of grain exports.

Sec. 303. Report on policy barriers to grain producers.

TITLE I—MANDATORY PRICE REPORTING

SEC. 101. EXTENSION OF LIVESTOCK MANDATORY REPORTING.

(a) *EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY.*—Section 260 of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1636i) is amended by striking "September 30, 2015" and inserting "September 30, 2020".

(b) *CONFORMING AMENDMENT.*—Section 942 of the Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act of 1999 (7 U.S.C. 1635 note; Public Law 106-78) is amended by striking "September 30, 2015" and inserting "September 30, 2020".

SEC. 102. SWINE REPORTING.

(a) *DEFINITIONS.*—Section 231 of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1635i) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (9) through (22) as paragraphs (10) through (23), respectively;

(2) by inserting after paragraph (8) the following:

"(9) *NEGOTIATED FORMULA PURCHASE.*—The term 'negotiated formula purchase' means a swine or pork market formula purchase under which—

"(A) the formula is determined by negotiation on a lot-by-lot basis; and

"(B) the swine are scheduled for delivery to the packer not later than 14 days after the date on which the formula is negotiated and swine are committed to the packer.";

(3) in paragraph (12)(A) (as so redesignated), by inserting "negotiated formula purchase," after "pork market formula purchase,"; and

(4) in paragraph (23) (as so redesignated)—

(A) in subparagraph (C), by striking "and" at the end;

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E); and

(C) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

"(D) a negotiated formula purchase; and".

(b) *DAILY REPORTING.*—Section 232(c) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1635j(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(D), by striking clause (ii) and inserting the following:

"(ii) *PRICE DISTRIBUTIONS.*—The information published by the Secretary under clause (i) shall include—

"(I) a distribution of net prices in the range between and including the lowest net price and the highest net price reported;

"(II) a delineation of the number of barrows and gilts at each reported price level or, at the option of the Secretary, the number of barrows and gilts within each of a series of reasonable price bands within the range of prices; and

"(III) the total number and weighted average price of barrows and gilts purchased through negotiated purchases and negotiated formula purchases."; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by adding at the end the following:

"(C) *LATE IN THE DAY REPORT INFORMATION.*—The Secretary shall include in the morning report and the afternoon report for the following day any information required to be reported under subparagraph (A) that is obtained after the time of the reporting day specified in that subparagraph."

SEC. 103. LAMB REPORTING.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall revise section 59.300 of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, so that—

(1) the definition of the term "importer"—

(A) includes only those importers that imported an average of 1,000 metric tons of lamb meat products per year during the immediately preceding 4 calendar years; and

(B) may include any person that does not meet the requirement referred to in subparagraph (A), if the Secretary determines that the person should be considered an importer based on their volume of lamb imports; and

(2) the definition of the term "packer"—

(A) applies to any entity with 50 percent or more ownership in a facility;

(B) includes a federally inspected lamb processing plant which slaughtered or processed the equivalent of an average of 35,000 head of lambs per year during the immediately preceding 5 calendar years; and

(C) may include any other lamb processing plant that does not meet the requirement referred to in subparagraph (B), if the Secretary determines that the processing plant should be considered a packer after considering the capacity of the processing plant.

SEC. 104. STUDY ON LIVESTOCK MANDATORY REPORTING.

(a) *STUDY REQUIRED.*—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Agricultural Marketing Service in conjunction with the Office of the Chief Economist and in consultation with cattle, swine, and lamb producers, packers, and other market participants, shall conduct a study on the program of information regarding the marketing of cattle, swine, lambs, and products of such livestock under subtitle B of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1635 et seq.).

(2) *REQUIREMENTS.*—The study shall—

(A) analyze current marketing practices in the cattle, swine, and lamb markets;

(B) identify legislative or regulatory recommendations made by cattle, swine, and lamb producers, packers, and other market participants to ensure that information provided under the program—

(i) can be readily understood by producers, packers, and other market participants;

(ii) reflects current marketing practices; and

(iii) is relevant and useful to producers, packers, and other market participants;

(C) analyze the price and supply information reporting services of the Department of Agriculture related to cattle, swine, and lamb; and

(D) address any other issues that the Secretary considers appropriate.

(b) *REPORT.*—Not later than March 1, 2018, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report containing the findings of the study conducted under subsection (a).