

I am most appreciative of your decision to forgo action on H.R. 2643 so that it may move expeditiously to the House floor. I acknowledge that although you are waiving action on the bill, the Committee on the Judiciary is in no way waiving its jurisdictional interest in this or similar legislation. In addition, if a conference is necessary on this legislation, I will support any request that your committee be represented therein.

Finally, I shall be pleased to include your letter and this letter in our committee's report on H.R. 2643 and in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the same.

Sincerely,

JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2643, and I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation.

I want to briefly say a few words about Mr. WILLIAMS' bill, H.R. 2643, the State Licensing Efficiency Act of 2015.

This legislation is extremely important. I am proud that this bill is a product of a bipartisan effort, a bipartisan effort that, in the last Congress, I was privileged to work with the Committee on Financial Services chair emeritus, Chairman Bachus, on this legislation.

Unfortunately, the clock ran out on the last Congress. So I am very pleased that Mr. WILLIAMS has taken up this legislation and gotten it to the floor.

It just makes all the sense in the world to streamline criminal background checks. I want to thank Mr. WILLIAMS and thank my colleague, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, for championing this legislation.

I urge adoption of this bill. I have no further speakers on this bill.

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

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS), the primary author of this bill.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I would also like to thank my colleague, Ms. MOORE, for her hard work on this. I appreciate it.

H.R. 2643, the State Licensing Efficiency Act, will expand the State's ability to use a federally accepted registry, the Nationwide Multistate Licensing System, to expedite background checks.

For many State-licensed financial service providers, the current background check process is inefficient, but this registry has a proven track record of being effective while also reducing regulatory burden.

Under the SAFE Act, the current NMLS, developed by State banking commissioners, has been used to oversee the mortgage industry since 2008. To date, the Conference of State Bank Supervisors has channeled over 1.3 million fingerprint checks of mortgage loan originators.

Citing an absence in Federal law, the FBI has prevented its use to conduct background checks for other financial

services, including money transmitters, debt collectors, pawnbrokers, and check cashers.

Whereas a State wishing to conduct a criminal background check through traditional means may wait several weeks and sometimes even months for their response, NMLS communicates directly with the FBI and often receives the same results, as we have heard, in just 24 hours.

H.R. 2643 would expand the current system to include those financial service providers who are already licensed by the State and require a Federal background check.

The NMLS provides increased collaboration between State banking departments, reduces the risk of bad actors by preventing them from continuing to operate, and improves the safety and soundness of the financial system as a whole. In short, NMLS provides an added level of assurance to community banks that their business customers and vendors are operating legally.

Supported by the Conference of State Bank Supervisors, expanding the use of NMLS provides State regulators a secure and efficient means by which to conduct background checks on license applicants.

I want to be clear. As we have heard in the past, this bill does not create any requirements for background checks or fingerprints, but greatly increases efficiency and transparency.

In addition, by no means does this bill encourage States to require or mandate States to license or register any additional class of financial service providers.

This act authorizes only State-licensed loan originators and other State-licensed financial service providers to be processed through NMLS for background checks authorized under the laws of the State. Simply put, by expanding its use, NMLS will save industry and, ultimately, the consumer money.

At the end of 2014, there were around 20,386 professionals registered in the NMLS system. Those individuals, as we have heard, required over 105,000 background checks outside the NMLS system. If our bill becomes law, we would reduce that number by 80 percent because we would be using one system instead of 50, saving industry \$1.1 million by removing duplicate background checks.

Finally, in my home State of Texas, the expansion of NMLS is supported by State Banking Commissioner Charles Cooper, who we talked about tonight. I want to take a moment to thank Commissioner Cooper for his leadership on this issue.

In addition, I want to thank my own staff and the staff of CSBS, who have worked tirelessly to support our efforts in pushing this legislation through. Without them and the support of my colleagues on the committee and Chairman HENSARLING, none of this would be possible. I thank Chairman NEUGEBAUER, and I thank Ms. MOORE.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 2643.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2643.

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.

□ 1745

SOCIAL MEDIA WORKING GROUP ACT OF 2015

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 623) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Department of Homeland Security to establish a social media working group, 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.

This Act may be cited as the "DHS Social Media Improvement Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. SOCIAL MEDIA WORKING GROUP.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Title III of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 181 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 318. SOCIAL MEDIA WORKING GROUP.

"(a) *ESTABLISHMENT.*—The Secretary shall establish within the Department a social media working group (in this section referred to as the 'Group').

"(b) *PURPOSE.*—In order to enhance the dissemination of information through social media technologies between the Department and appropriate stakeholders and to improve use of social media technologies in support of preparedness, response, and recovery, the Group shall identify, and provide guidance and best practices to the emergency preparedness and response community on, the use of social media technologies before, during, and after a natural disaster or an act of terrorism or other man-made disaster.

"(c) MEMBERSHIP.—

"(1) *IN GENERAL.*—Membership of the Group shall be composed of a cross section of subject matter experts from Federal, State, local, tribal, territorial, and nongovernmental organization practitioners, including representatives from the following entities:

"(A) The Office of Public Affairs of the Department.

"(B) The Office of the Chief Information Officer of the Department.

"(C) The Privacy Office of the Department.

"(D) The Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"(E) The Office of Disability Integration and Coordination of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"(F) The American Red Cross.

"(G) The Forest Service.

"(H) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"(I) The United States Geological Survey.

"(J) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

“(2) CHAIRPERSON; CO-CHAIRPERSON.—

“(A) CHAIRPERSON.—The Secretary, or a designee of the Secretary, shall serve as the chairperson of the Group.

“(B) CO-CHAIRPERSON.—The chairperson shall designate, on a rotating basis, a representative from a State or local government who is a member of the Group to serve as the co-chairperson of the Group.

“(3) ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.—The chairperson shall appoint, on a rotating basis, qualified individuals to the Group. The total number of such additional members shall—

“(A) be equal to or greater than the total number of regular members under paragraph (1); and

“(B) include—

“(i) not fewer than 3 representatives from the private sector; and

“(ii) representatives from—

“(1) State, local, tribal, and territorial entities, including from—

“(aa) law enforcement;

“(bb) fire services;

“(cc) emergency management; and

“(dd) public health entities;

“(11) universities and academies; and

“(III) nonprofit disaster relief organizations.

“(4) TERM LIMITS.—The chairperson shall establish term limits for individuals appointed to the Group under paragraph (3).

“(d) CONSULTATION WITH NON-MEMBERS.—To the extent practicable, the Group shall work with entities in the public and private sectors to carry out subsection (b).

“(e) MEETINGS.—

“(1) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Group shall hold its initial meeting.

“(2) SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS.—After the initial meeting under paragraph (1), the Group shall meet—

“(A) at the call of the chairperson; and

“(B) not less frequently than twice each year.

“(3) VIRTUAL MEETINGS.—Each meeting of the Group may be held virtually.

“(f) REPORTS.—During each year in which the Group meets, the Group shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that includes the following:

“(1) A review and analysis of current and emerging social media technologies being used to support preparedness and response activities related to natural disasters and acts of terrorism and other man-made disasters.

“(2) A review of best practices and lessons learned on the use of social media technologies during the response to natural disasters and acts of terrorism and other man-made disasters that occurred during the period covered by the report at issue.

“(3) Recommendations to improve the Department’s use of social media technologies for emergency management purposes.

“(4) Recommendations to improve public awareness of the type of information disseminated through social media technologies, and how to access such information, during a natural disaster or an act of terrorism or other man-made disaster.

“(5) A review of available training for Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial officials on the use of social media technologies in response to a natural disaster or an act of terrorism or other man-made disaster.

“(6) A review of coordination efforts with the private sector to discuss and resolve legal, operational, technical, privacy, and security concerns.

“(g) DURATION OF GROUP.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Group shall terminate on the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of this section unless the chairperson renews the Group for a successive 5-year period, prior to the date on which the Group would otherwise terminate, by submitting to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on

Homeland Security of the House of Representatives a certification that the continued existence of the Group is necessary to fulfill the purpose described in subsection (b).

“(2) CONTINUED RENEWAL.—The chairperson may continue to renew the Group for successive 5-year periods by submitting a certification in accordance with paragraph (1) prior to the date on which the Group would otherwise terminate.”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 317 the following:

“Sec. 318. Social media working group.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CARSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 623, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As disasters become more frequent and severe, it is critical that emergency managers and citizens take advantage of new technologies to send and receive critical information.

Social media has become an essential tool in the preparedness, response, and recovery for all hazards, whether natural or manmade. We saw how critical social media was in relaying information following Hurricane Sandy, the Boston Marathon bombing, and, just a few weeks ago, during Hurricane Joaquin and the historic flooding in South Carolina. Social media helps reach people in need, helps get the right information into the hands of the public, helps organize volunteers, and can be a source of critical on-the-ground information to decisionmakers.

H.R. 623, as amended by the Senate, would require DHS to establish a social media working group to enhance the use of social media to support preparedness, response, and recovery of all hazards. This group will be required to report to Congress on an annual basis on its findings, emerging trends, and best practices.

I commend the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS) for sponsoring this legislation.

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

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 623, the DHS Social Media Improvement Act of 2015, was introduced by my good friend and colleague from Indiana, Congresswoman SUSAN BROOKS.

The bill, Mr. Speaker, was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and to the Committee

on Homeland Security. This bill codifies the Department of Homeland Security’s Social Media Working Group to enhance the use of social media during disasters and other events, and to provide guidance and best practices in emergency preparedness and response. Social media, especially Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, can play a critical role in preparedness, response, and recovery operations during emergencies.

Emergency managers at all levels use social media to warn those in harm’s way of impending natural hazards. Social media is also used to inform survivors on how to access disaster assistance and tips for speedier recoveries. Equally important, Mr. Speaker, social media has been used to coordinate and manage assistance from nonprofits and volunteers who want to help in recovery efforts.

More and more, we are seeing individuals take to social media during emergencies. Individuals have used social media to help identify locations where assistance may still be needed and to raise awareness of impending hazards. They have also used it, Mr. Speaker, to communicate with loved ones who may be impacted by an event as well as reconnect pets with their owners. This has certainly been the case in the great Hoosier State.

This last summer, Mr. Speaker, will go down as the wettest summer in Indianapolis history. Rainfall in July broke a 140-year-old record in our great city, making it the wettest month ever recorded, and social media helped keep residents informed in real time. In Indianapolis, the National Weather Service, Department of Homeland Security, and local broadcasters routinely used social media to post updates on ever-changing weather conditions.

The very unique benefit of social media alerts is that you don’t have to be right next to a radio or TV to be informed; you can virtually be anywhere. This summer, when dangerous flooding covered many roads in our city, social media exploded with pictures of flooded roadways and stranded motorists. This nontraditional tool enabled people to know where major problems were located and to avoid danger with the famous catchphrase, “Turn Around Don’t Drown.”

The existing DHS Social Media Working Group provides recommendations on how to use social media before, during, and after emergencies. This working group, Mr. Speaker, consists of emergency responders, NGOs, nonprofits, and Federal agencies.

I support the provisions in today’s bill to broaden the group’s membership to include private sector representatives and to require consultation with nonmembers.

To ensure accountability, this requires an annual report to Congress on important issues, such as best practices and lessons learned. It would also provide recommendations on how to improve the use of the social media

platform for emergency management purposes.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we recognize the importance of this platform for emergency management. I would be remiss not to remind our colleagues of the need to authorize the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, also known as IPAWS.

As the committee of primary jurisdiction over IPAWS, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee unanimously approved the Barletta-Carson IPAWS authorization bill back in April and ordered the bill reported. It is past time for this bill to be considered in the House.

Despite the Senate's inadvertent omission of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I support this bill, Mr. Speaker, and I urge our colleagues to do the same to approve this measure.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS), the sponsor of this bill.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 623, the DHS Social Media Improvement Act of 2015.

I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his management of the bill and, also, my good friend and colleague from the State of Indiana, Congressman CARSON. Both of us have served in public safety in the past, and so it is especially gratifying that he is managing the bill as well this evening.

Social media, as we have heard, is transforming the way the Nation is communicating before, during, and after terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and other emergencies. There are countless examples from recent events of how citizens are turning to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and even Snapchat for public safety information, to comfort survivors, tell loved ones they are safe, and request assistance.

As has already been mentioned, citizens of South Carolina used social media to communicate with first responders, friends, and families after heavy rainfall caused destructive flash flooding across the State.

Additionally, a quarter of Americans—let me repeat, a quarter of Americans—got information about the devastating terrorist attack at the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing from Facebook and Twitter.

Citizens are not the only ones using social media during and after an emergency. First responders are proactively using social media as a force multiplier to get vital information out. For example, immediately following the terrorist attack and during the manhunt, the Boston PD utilized social media as a way to communicate with and solicit information from citizens and visitors.

These are just a few of the hundreds of examples that demonstrate the prevalence of social media use before, during, and after an emergency.

In the 113th Congress, I served as the chair of the Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications. The subcommittee held two hearings that focused on this new phenomenon, and I learned at that time that while the Nation is making great strides in this area, gaps and challenges remain.

One of the key takeaways, however, was that during and after a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other emergency, there is still a need for better communication between the public and the private sectors, specifically, with how to utilize social media as a communication tool.

So last year, I was proud to work with the ranking member, Congressman PAYNE, to find ways to better utilize social media during disasters by leveraging both public and private resources and experiences.

The bill passed with overwhelming support last Congress and, after reintroduction this Congress, I am pleased to say, in February, the House again resoundingly agreed to its passage.

H.R. 623, while authorizing and enhancing the Department of Homeland Security's existing social media group, essentially what it does is it ensures that best practices and lessons learned on the use of social media during terrorist attacks or disasters are being discussed and shared with Federal, State, and local first responders, non-governmental organizations, academia, and the private sector.

Currently, the Virtual Social Media Working Group is made up primarily of State and local officials, and they are doing great work and developing guidance. However, this bill will increase the group's stakeholder participation, particularly among the private sector and the Federal response agencies.

So by including private sector groups like Google and Twitter and Facebook, we know it will improve coordination and relief efforts. Also, as we have already heard, it will require the group to submit an annual report to Congress highlighting best practices, lessons learned, and any recommendations. Finally, this bill will require the group to meet, in person or virtually, at least twice a year, and will not be a financial burden on the Department.

I appreciate the swift action of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. I especially want to thank Chairman JOHNSON for his leadership on this issue. Their thoughtful additions have served to further improve the bill.

I also want to thank Chairman SHUSTER and Chairman BARLETTA of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for working with me to get this bill to the floor, and also my successor at EPRC, Ms. MCSALLY, for continuing to make this issue a priority.

Finally, I want to thank the staff, because we know that this bill and the improvements with technology will

save lives, and it will make our first responders and those in danger safer.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 623.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NORTHERN BORDER SECURITY REVIEW ACT

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 455) to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to conduct a northern border threat analysis, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 455

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 "Northern Border Security Review Act".

SEC. 2. NORTHERN BORDER THREAT ANALYSIS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a Northern Border threat analysis that includes—

(1) current and potential terrorism and criminal threats posed by individuals and organized groups seeking to—

(A) enter the United States through the Northern Border; or

(B) exploit border vulnerabilities along the Northern Border;

(2) improvements needed at and between ports of entry along the Northern Border to—

(A) prevent terrorists and instruments of terror from entering the United States; and

(B) reduce criminal activity, as measured by the total flow of illegal goods, illicit drugs, and smuggled and trafficked persons moved in either direction across the Northern Border;

(3) gaps in law, policy, cooperation between State, local, and tribal law enforcement, international agreements, or tribal agreements that hinder effective and efficient border security, counter-terrorism, anti-human smuggling and trafficking efforts, and the flow of legitimate trade along the Northern Border; and

(4) an analysis of whether additional U.S. Customs and Border Protection preclearance and pre-inspection operations at ports of entry along the Northern Border could help prevent terrorists and instruments of terror from entering the United States.

(b) ANALYSIS REQUIREMENTS.—For the threat analysis required under subsection (a), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall consider and examine—

(1) technology needs and challenges;

(2) personnel needs and challenges;

(3) the role of State, local, and tribal law enforcement in general border security activities;