

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York) at 4 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER  
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

COMBAT TERRORIST USE OF  
SOCIAL MEDIA ACT OF 2015

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3654) to require a report on United States strategy to combat terrorist use of social media, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3654

*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 “Combat Terrorist Use of Social Media Act of 2015”.

**SEC. 2. REPORT ON STRATEGY TO COMBAT TERRORIST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on United States strategy to combat terrorists’ and terrorist organizations’ use of social media.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An evaluation of what role social media plays in radicalization in the United States and elsewhere.

(2) An analysis of how terrorists and terrorist organizations are using social media, including trends.

(3) A summary of the Federal Government’s efforts to disrupt and counter the use of social media by terrorists and terrorist organizations, an evaluation of the success of such efforts, and recommendations for improvement.

(4) An analysis of how social media is being used for counter-radicalization and counter-propaganda purposes, irrespective of whether or not such efforts are made by the Federal Government.

(5) An assessment of the value of social media posts by terrorists and terrorist organizations to law enforcement.

(6) An overview of social media training available to law enforcement and intelligence personnel that enables such personnel to understand and combat the use of social media by terrorists and terrorist organizations, as well as recommendations for improving or expanding existing training opportunities.

(c) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) should be submitted in unclassified form, and may include a classified annex in accordance with the protection of intelligence sources and methods.

**SEC. 3. POLICY AND COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY TO COUNTER TERRORISTS’ AND TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS’ USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that contains a comprehensive strategy to counter terrorists’ and terrorist organizations’ use of social media, as committed to in the President’s 2011 “Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States”.

(b) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) should be submitted in unclassified form, and may include a classified annex in accordance with the protection of intelligence sources and methods.

**SEC. 4. APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.**

In this Act, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on the Armed Services, the Committee on Homeland Security, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material for the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this legislation, H.R. 3654. It is entitled the Combat Terrorist Use of Social Media Act of 2015.

I want to recognize the leadership of Judge TED POE, a Member of this body, on this critical issue.

The threats posed by Islamist terrorists have evolved, but the administration’s policies have not evolved. If we are going to prevent additional attacks, then the President must lay out a broad, overarching strategy needed to win. That strategy must include a plan to counter terrorists’ use of social media.

Terrorists are skillfully exploiting social media to recruit supporters, to radicalize, to raise money, to spread fear. Two weeks ago in San Bernardino, California, 14 innocent people were killed, and 21 people were injured by radical Islamist terrorists. We know these extremists—husband and wife—used social media, with one of them making a pledge on Facebook in support of ISIS. This pledge was identified by Facebook and was taken down immediately.

Yesterday, it was revealed that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security actually prohibited immigration officials from reviewing the social media postings of all foreign citizens who were applying for U.S. visas and that they only intermittently began looking at posts from some visa applicants. So imagine a situation in which you have people who are going to Syria, who are posting on social media, and you have a blanket prohibition on reviewing those social media postings. That was the state of the situation as we were trying to defend the homeland.

Frankly, the failure of this administration to incorporate a review of social media posts into the visa approval process is absurd. Ignoring the online statements of terrorists who are trying to enter the United States puts our country at risk. This must fixed.

This bill, frankly, is timely; it is important; and it forces the administration to put forward a strategy to combat terrorists’ use of this social media. In 2011, the President promised to create that strategy, but he never delivered anything. We are, simply, not going to defeat ISIS or other terrorist groups without combating their social media recruiting.

Following a bipartisan letter from Representatives POE of Texas, ENGEL, SHERMAN, and myself last March, Twitter strengthened its policies to assert that statements threatening or promoting terrorism were against Twitter’s terms of service. Most of the other social media companies have similar user guidelines that prohibit threats of violence and the use of their platforms by terrorists.

We need a strategy that clearly articulates our country’s goals, the responsibilities of each Federal agency, what role each one will play, a vision of how our government is going to work with the private sector, and a vision of how we are going to pull civil society into this effort. Without a strategy, the administration’s effort to combat terrorists’ use of social media appears to be disconnected, and it appears to be ineffective.

Then, of course, after we have that strategy, we are going to need action. It is ironic that extremist groups have turned to Twitter, to Facebook, and to YouTube in order to encourage attacks on a free society when these companies would not have been created without there having been a free society, one which upholds free speech, free thought, and encourages entrepreneurship.

Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that the administration lays out how we will contend with these terrorists in their hijacking of the social network for their twisted purposes. We truly have, basically, a caliphate today on the Internet—a virtual caliphate, if you will, on the Internet. This bill by Judge TED POE is intended to force a strategy to solve this problem.

I reserve the balance of my time.