

As a member of the Homeland Security Committee, I believe this act will maintain a standard across the board for programs to follow the Government Accountability Office's (GAO's) best practices.

The Department of Homeland Security is constantly changing to fit the needs of our ever-changing world and there is a need of transparency between the DHS and GAO.

This bill further requires that cost estimates and schedules for major acquisition programs be consistent with best practices as identified by GAO.

Finally this bill limits the Secretary's authority to waive acquisition documentation requirements for a report to Congress on the status of major acquisition programs.

This sets forth narrow conditions where waivers could be granted for a fiscal year, and requiring the Secretary to report annually to the Congressional homeland-security committees on each use of waiver authority during the preceding fiscal year.

This bill creates an accountability model for the DHS which creates transparency between GAO and DHS and saves programs time and money, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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, H.R. 4398.

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.

FOREIGN FIGHTER REVIEW ACT OF 2016

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4402) to require a review of information regarding persons who have traveled or attempted to travel from the United States to support terrorist organizations in Syria and Iraq, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4402

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 "Foreign Fighter Review Act of 2016".

SEC. 2. UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF CERTAIN FOREIGN FIGHTERS.

(a) REVIEW.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President, acting through the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall initiate a review of known instances since 2011 in which a person has traveled or attempted to travel to a conflict zone in Iraq or Syria from the United States to join or provide material support or resources to a terrorist organization. Such review shall—

(1) include relevant unclassified and classified information held by the United States Government related to each instance;

(2) ascertain which factors, including operational issues, security vulnerabilities, systemic challenges, or other issues that may have undermined efforts to prevent the travel of such persons to a conflict zone in Iraq

or Syria from the United States, including the timely identification of suspects, information sharing, intervention, and interdiction; and

(3) identify lessons learned and areas for improvement to prevent additional travel by such persons to a conflict zone in Iraq or Syria, or other terrorist safe havens abroad, to join or provide material support or resources to a terrorist organization.

(b) INFORMATION SHARING.—If necessary, the President shall direct the heads of relevant Federal agencies to provide the appropriate information necessary for the Secretary of Homeland Security to complete the review required under subsection (a).

(c) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall, consistent with the protection of classified information, submit to the appropriate congressional committees the results of the review required under subsection (a), which may include information on travel routes of greatest concern.

(d) PROHIBITION ON ADDITIONAL FUNDING.—No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) in the House of Representatives—

(i) the Committee on Homeland Security; (ii) the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence;

(iii) the Committee on the Judiciary;

(iv) the Committee on Armed Services;

(v) the Committee on Foreign Affairs;

(vi) the Committee on Financial Services; and

(vii) the Committee on Appropriations; and (B) in the Senate—

(i) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs;

(ii) the Select Committee on Intelligence;

(iii) the Committee on the Judiciary;

(iv) the Committee on Armed Services;

(v) the Committee on Foreign Relations;

(vi) the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; and

(vii) the Committee on Appropriations.

(2) MATERIAL SUPPORT OR RESOURCES.—The term "material support or resources" has the meaning given such term in section 2339A of title 18, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) and the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HURD of Texas. 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 materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, there have been over 250 cases of Americans attempting to travel to Syria and Iraq in order to support terrorist groups since 2011. Overall, 85 percent of Westerners attempting to join groups like ISIS are succeeding without being apprehended by law enforcement officials.

The ability to make it to a war zone has grave consequences. Those who have been radicalized gain firsthand knowledge and training, making them an even greater threat.

There is a clear breakdown in our ability to identify and then prevent these individuals from leaving the country in the first place. That is why I introduced the Foreign Fighter Review Act of 2016.

The bill requires the Department of Homeland Security to study and identify all known foreign fighter travel in an effort to highlight the specific challenges and impediments that law enforcement faces in its attempts to stop individuals from joining terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria.

DHS should already be collecting this kind of data and conducting this type of analysis. The findings from this type of study are crucial to informing Congress on additional steps we can take to improve the security of our Nation. This was a key finding in the bipartisan Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel, of which I was a member.

It is imperative that we get the right information to the right people at the right time to catch those who have been radicalized before they leave the country, not after they have gained combat experience and returned to the homeland. The Foreign Fighter Review Act of 2016 is the first step towards getting our law enforcement agencies the tools that they need to do just that.

I urge all Members to join me in supporting this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4402, the Foreign Fighter Review Act of 2016.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4402 requires the President, through the Department of Homeland Security, to review information regarding persons who have traveled or attempted to travel from the United States to Syria and Iraq since 2011 to support terrorist organizations. This legislation reflects a recommendation issued by the Committee on Homeland Security's Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel in its final report.

The report found that a large number of U.S. persons have been able to travel to dangerous terrorist safe havens in Iraq and Syria and return to the United States without interdiction. I believe there is a lot to be learned from the instances where we failed to interdict persons who traveled to terrorist safe havens. These "lessons learned" could reveal systematic weaknesses in our security programs and highlight areas for enhancements.

While many Federal agencies have completed individual reviews of cases within their purview, a coordinated and comprehensive interagency after-action review has never been undertaken. H.R. 4402 would require just such a review.

H.R. 4402 has the potential to strengthen coordination across the Federal Government to help prevent U.S. persons from exploiting vulnerabilities in our security apparatus to travel under the radar to terrorist camps and safe havens in the future. As such, Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of H.R. 4402.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO).

Mr. KATKO. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Texas for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, after having spent much of the last year heading a bipartisan task force with the author of this bill, Mr. HURD, it became clear that we are not winning the fight to keep Americans from being recruited by terrorist groups.

The majority of our citizens who have tried to go to join ISIS have succeeded in doing so. They were not stopped by law enforcement. And while authorities have worked hard and have disrupted serious plots, we have got to do more to shut down the foreign fighter pipeline.

On the House Homeland Security Committee, we are constantly briefed about the new threat streams, the soaring number of terror investigations here at home, and the Americans being lured to fight in places like Syria alongside ISIS.

We cannot simply listen to this information and sit on our hands. We need to act. I commend my colleague for this bill and for implementing one of our important task force recommendations.

We need to conduct a top-to-bottom review of instances where Americans were recruited to fight with jihadist groups abroad, and we need to figure out where we could have done more to stop it. This is why I rise in strong support of H.R. 4402, the Foreign Fighter Review Act of 2016. This legislation will ensure that our government takes a hard look at how to better deter, detect, and disrupt terrorist travel, especially when it involves our own citizens.

But this will not be some review that is ordered and then forgotten. The administration is required to return to Congress with the "lessons learned" from these recent cases so that we can fix the problem, rather than allow it to persist.

My colleague has a wealth of knowledge that proved to be invaluable during the past year on the task force when we focused on these issues. I would like to conclude by thanking Mr. HURD for his steadfast leadership, especially on national security issues.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I again urge passage of H.R. 4402, a bill that seeks to improve the Federal Government's under-

standing of the circumstances surrounding travel or attempted travel from the U.S. to terrorist safe havens in Syria and Iraq.

Under this measure, the review is to be submitted to Congress within 120 days of enactment. The findings of that review have the potential to inform policymakers as we work to strengthen our ability to prevent travel to terrorist sanctuaries and terrorism at large.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4402. I would like to thank both the gentleman from New York for his leadership on the task force and my colleague from New Jersey for her work on the Homeland Security Committee.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4402 the "Foreign Fighter Review Act of 2016," which requires the president, acting through the Homeland Security Secretary, to initiate a review of known instances since 2011 in which a person has traveled or attempted to travel from the United States to a conflict zone in Iraq or Syria to join or provide material support or resources to a terrorist organization.

As a senior member of the House Committee on Homeland Security and the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations, I take seriously threats to the security of the homeland and our responsibility to put in place adequate measures to defeat them.

That is why in the first session of this Congress I introduced H.R. 48 "No Fly for Foreign Fighters Act," which reviews the completeness of the Terrorist Screening Database and the terrorist watch list utilized by the Transportation Security Administration.

I support H.R. 4402 because it would evaluate any flaws in existing programs or procedures that aim to prevent such travel and identify ways to improve their effectiveness.

Since 2011, more than 30,000 foreign fighters from over 100 different countries have traveled to Syria and Iraq to fight for ISIL.

In the last 18 months, the number of foreign fighters traveling to Syria and Iraq has more than doubled.

In the first six months of 2015, more than 7,000 foreign fighters have arrived in Syria and Iraq.

According to a report issued last year by the Committee on Homeland Security's Foreign Fighter Task Force, U.S. officials apprehended less than 20 percent (28/250) of Americans who sought to travel to the region.

The report also found that while information sharing had improved, there is currently no comprehensive global database of foreign fighters.

It is estimated that at 250 persons who have traveled to Syria or Iraq to join ISIS hold American citizenship.

Since these persons who identify with the terrorist aims of ISIS can leave and enter the United States, it is critically important that American customs and security officials have

the most accurate and effective terrorist screening tools available.

H.R. 4402 helps address this problem by identifying areas for improvement to prevent additional travel by "Foreign Fighters" to conflict zones in areas such as Iraq, Syria, or other terrorist safe havens abroad, to join or provide material support or resources to a terrorist organization.

Specifically, H.R. 4402 directs the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to conduct a review and report to the Congress on the following:

1. Relevant unclassified and classified information held by the U.S. government related to each instance:

2. The factors including operational issues, security vulnerabilities and systemic challenges that may have undermined efforts to prevent the travel of such persons to a conflict zone in Iraq or Syria, including the timely identification of suspects, information sharing, intervention and interdiction.

3. The lessons learned and areas for improvement to prevent additional travel by such persons to conflict zones or other terrorist safe havens.

The bill also requires the President to direct the heads of relevant federal agencies to provide to the Homeland Security Secretary the information needed to complete the review, which is due within 120 days of enactment.

Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging that progress has been made in preventing individuals inspired by the Islamic State and other Islamic extremist groups to either travel to Syria and Iraq or carry out attacks on U.S. soil, but we need to do more and remain ever vigilant to protect the security of our homeland.

H.R. 4402 is a positive step in the right direction and I urge all Members to support this important legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4402, as amended.

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. HURD of Texas. 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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOMACK) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.