

that enjoys broad support from outside experts. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important reform. I thank my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee for their bipartisan effort to produce this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2947, the "Financial Institution Bankruptcy Act of 2016." for several reasons.

To begin with, the bill addresses a real need—recognized by regulatory agencies, bankruptcy experts, and the private sector—that the bankruptcy law must be amended so that it can expeditiously restore trust in the financial marketplace as soon as possible after the collapse of a major financial institution.

As many of you may recall, the failure of Lehman Brothers in 2008 caused a worldwide freeze on the availability of credit, which not only affected Wall Street, but Main Street as well.

Even after Lehman sought bankruptcy relief, the filing did not prevent the near collapse of our Nation's economy. The Lehman case revealed that current bankruptcy law is ill-equipped to deal with complex financial institutions in economic distress.

H.R. 2947 addresses these shortcomings by establishing a specialized form of bankruptcy relief whereby the holding company of a large financial institution could expeditiously obtain such relief, while allowing its operating subsidiaries to function outside of bankruptcy.

Through this mechanism, the debtor's principal assets, such as its secured property, financial contracts, and the stock of its subsidiaries, would be transferred to a temporary "bridge company," that, in turn, would liquidate these assets for the benefit of creditors under the supervision of a trustee.

This process should reduce the likelihood of disruption to the financial marketplace and avoid any worldwide freeze on the availability of credit.

Another reason why I support this bill is that it appropriately recognizes the important role the Dodd-Frank Act has in the regulation of large financial institutions.

Without doubt, the Great Recession was a direct result of the regulatory equivalent of the Wild West.

In the absence of any meaningful regulation of the mortgage industry, lenders developed high risk subprime mortgages and used predatory marketing tactics targeting the most vulnerable.

These doomed-to-fail mortgages were then securitized and sold to unsuspecting investors, including pension funds and school districts.

Millions of Americans were trapped in mortgages they could no longer afford. This resulted in causing vast waves of foreclosures, massive unemployment, and international economic upheaval.

The Dodd-Frank Act goes a long way toward reinvigorating a regulatory system that makes the financial marketplace more accountable, more transparent, and more resilient.

And, H.R. 2947 will make the Dodd-Frank Act even more effective by ensuring the bankruptcy law is better equipped to resolve these companies.

Finally, I am pleased that H.R. 2947 is the product of a very collaborative, inclusive, and deliberative process.

A collaborative process—particularly with respect to complex legislation with wide-ranging

consequences—is essential. It should be the norm, not the exception.

Accordingly, I commend Judiciary Committee Chairman GOODLATTE for his leadership in ensuring this collaborative process for H.R. 2947.

Nevertheless, while the bill is an excellent measure, it unfortunately does not include any provision allowing the federal government to be a lender of last resort, a critical element that nearly every expert recognizes is necessary to ensure financial stability. This is a matter that at some point must be addressed.

Again, I want to acknowledge the excellent level of cooperation on both sides of the aisle in producing the legislation that is pending before us today.

In closing, I appreciate that my Judiciary Committee colleagues on both sides of the aisle have come together to support H.R. 2947.

Nevertheless, I strongly encourage Chairman GOODLATTE to consider other bankruptcy-related measures that my colleagues and I have introduced this Congress dealing with equally important matters.

These measures include H.R. 97, the "Protecting Employees and Retirees in Business Bankruptcies Act," which I introduced to help level the playing field for employees and pensioners in corporate bankruptcy cases.

I also would urge consideration of legislation, such as H.R. 1674, the "Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act," a bill sponsored by my colleague, the gentleman from Tennessee STEVE COHEN, that would help relieve those who—through no fault of their own—become entrapped in unaffordable, predatory student loan obligations.

These measures also deserve to be considered prior to the close of this Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2947, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PREVENTING CRIMES AGAINST VETERANS ACT OF 2016

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4676) to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide an additional tool to prevent certain frauds against veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4676

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 "Preventing Crimes Against Veterans Act of 2016".

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL TOOL TO PREVENT CERTAIN FRAUDS AGAINST VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 47 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 1041. Fraud regarding veterans' benefits

"(a) Whoever knowingly engages in any scheme or artifice to defraud an individual of veterans' benefits, or in connection with obtaining veteran's benefits for that individual, shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

"(b) In this section—

"(1) the term 'veteran' has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38; and

"(2) the term 'veterans' benefits' means any benefit provided by Federal law for a veteran or a dependent or survivor of a veteran."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 47 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

"1041. Fraud regarding veterans' benefits."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 4676, as amended, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 4676, the Preventing Crimes Against Veterans Act of 2016, was introduced by Congressman TOM ROONEY of Florida, a former member of the Judiciary Committee, and Congressman TED DEUTCH of Florida, a current member of the Judiciary Committee.

This legislation fixes a loophole in Federal law and provides Federal prosecutors with an additional tool to go after criminals who seek to defraud veterans.

In recent years, financial predators have increasingly targeted veterans, particularly elderly veterans in low-income housing, in an effort to defraud the veterans out of their Veterans Affairs benefits.

These criminals offer to help veterans with their cases, claim to get their benefits approved in record time, charge fees that are often in the thousands of dollars, and then provide them with little or no assistance.

Under current law, many of these fraudsters would be vulnerable to prosecution under the mail or wire fraud statutes if they engage in this sort of fraudulent scheme by calling a veteran on the phone, sending them an email, mailing them a letter, or otherwise using the instrumentalities of interstate commerce to commit fraud.

However, increasingly these criminals are taking advantage of a loophole in Federal law by conducting in-person seminars or meeting in person at a veteran's home or assisted living facility.

In at least one recent example, a fraudster visited an assisted living facility in Florida and asked the staff to round up all the veterans for a seminar. This sort of conduct—swindling an elderly veteran out of his or her benefits—is truly reprehensible and worthy of Congress' attention.

H.R. 4676, which has the support of the veterans service community, addresses this conduct. This vulnerable population has done its duty to protect us from harm.

It is our duty to help protect them. To paraphrase Ronald Reagan, some people wonder all their lives if they have made a difference. Veterans don't have that problem.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation and protect our Nation's veterans.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am pleased to support H.R. 4676, the Preventing Crimes Against Veterans Act of 2016, as amended. This legislation provides an important tool for Federal prosecutors to combat veterans' benefits fraud, a very despicable practice.

Because we honor their service and the sacrifices that they have made, it is particularly important that we go above and beyond the call of duty to protect America's veterans from fraud and to ensure the integrity of the system of benefits we provide to them.

Currently, there are about 21 million veterans of the United States military, men and women who selflessly served our Nation in various theaters of war, from the Second World War, Korea, and Vietnam to more recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, many of our veterans, as a result of their service, have physical and mental scars.

There are well over 1 million American veterans with service-connected disabilities. The suicide rate among veterans is 300 percent above the national average, and it is estimated that about 30 percent of all Vietnam veterans and 20 percent of veterans of the recent Middle East conflicts suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder in a given year.

In addition, veterans are more likely than nonveterans to become homeless. They comprise 17 percent of our homeless population. On any given night, an estimated 50,000 veterans are sleeping on America's streets.

In recognition of the extreme sacrifice by our veterans and the hardships many of them continue to face after completion of their military service, it is our solemn duty and our obligation to provide to the best of our ability an appropriate measure of compensation for them.

For instance, we provide disability payments to those with service-connected disabilities. We provide pensions for veterans with limited incomes. We provide them with opportu-

nities for education and training under the GI Bill. And we also provide various life insurance benefits. This is the least that we can do, and it is still not enough.

Unfortunately, there continues to be issues with the medical care we provide our veterans and problems with some benefits never being processed and paid because of the loss of claims by the Veterans Benefits Administration.

H.R. 4676 would make it a crime to knowingly engage in any scheme to defraud a veteran of his or her veteran's benefits or to knowingly engage in fraud in connection with obtaining veteran's benefits. Anyone convicted of such crime could and should be fined, imprisoned, or subjected to both penalties.

I note that the amended version of the bill we are considering today reflects an amendment offered in the Judiciary Committee markup by Ranking Member JOHN CONYERS. The amendment, which was approved by voice vote, extends the bill's protections to fraud involving the benefits owed to the survivors and dependents due to the service of a veteran.

Those who defraud veterans or their surviving spouses or dependents endanger our system of veterans' benefits not only by harming the victims, but also by diminishing the resources required to pay these claims and fund the programs that are needed to help those who have served their country.

Accordingly, I support H.R. 4676. I commend the bill's sponsors, Representative TOM ROONEY and Representative TED DEUTCH, both of Florida, for their work on this important issue.

I thank the chairman for hastening the consideration of this very important piece of legislation by the full committee.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. ROONEY), the chief sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I serve nearly 75,000 veterans in Congress, making Florida's 17th District one of the highest concentrations of veterans in the whole Nation.

From helping veterans solve problems and process claims with the VA to working to fund veterans' benefits programs at levels deserving of their sacrifice, my duties to these 75,000 veterans is something that I take very seriously. But my constituents are quick to let me know that I still have a lot more work to do to fix the system.

One particularly disturbing problem was brought to my attention by a number of veterans service organizations in my district.

Last year I started to hear stories about individuals advertising themselves to veterans in my district, claiming that, for a hefty fee, which is illegal, they could expedite veterans' claims with the Department of Vet-

erans Affairs. The problem with that is they can't expedite these claims.

One local Veteran Services Division explained to me at length how these criminals are systematically targeting senior veterans in low-income housing communities almost as a rule because those vets are most likely to fall victim to their schemes.

Disturbingly, these guys will go into assisted living facilities and "round up all the veterans" and coerce veterans to apply for veterans' benefits they don't qualify for and to sign contracts agreeing to pay them for services that they can never provide.

We all know that the claims process at the VA is far too slow and takes far too long. My office works with veterans on a daily basis, as do the other Members here, to try to assist them with their claims and expedite the process when possible.

But when I hear that people are singling out veterans, targeting some of them based on their low income, and then earning a significant profit off them, that just makes me sick.

As the law stands now, even though it is illegal for anyone who is not an approved agent with the VA to charge a fee for helping a veteran with a claim or an appeal, there is no criminal or financial penalty associated with breaking this law.

Without a Federal criminal penalty, there is little deterring these despicable people from defrauding a veteran for financial gain. The reality is this: It is happening in all of our districts and people are getting away with it every day.

I refuse to let this continue unabated in my own backyard in this country, especially not to our veterans for whom I have so much respect, as do we all.

So along with my neighbor and friend, Democratic Congressman TED DEUTCH of south Florida, we introduced a bill to penalize people and companies making a living off of stealing from our veterans.

Our bill would give law enforcement and prosecutors the tools to penalize predators that are blatantly engaging in a scheme to defraud veterans, or their families, of his or her benefits by imposing a fine, imprisonment of up to 5 years, or both.

These criminals have to pay the price for their appalling actions. It is our duty in Congress to ensure that our Nation's heroes are protected under every circumstance and aspect of the law. I am proud that this bipartisan bill is on the floor today.

I urge my colleagues to join me, Congressman DEUTCH, and the chairman and the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee in support of this bill.

Each and every one of us owes our Nation's veterans the utmost respect. Today we have the chance to bring justice to those veterans who have fallen victim to the immoral schemes committed by some of the lowest forms of criminals in our country.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it warms my heart today to be a part of this body and to be a part of the movement of such important legislation as this, which is to protect people who are very vulnerable to abuse. Without our action, it will just simply continue.

I want to once again applaud the efforts of Representative TOM ROONEY and Representative TED DEUTCH for bringing this legislation to us.

I look forward to its passage. I would recommend to all of my colleagues that they join us and support this legislation.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee and Subcommittee on Crime Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, which reported this legislation, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4676 "Preventing Crimes Against Veterans Act of 2016", a bill that provides an important additional tool for federal prosecutors to combat veterans' benefits fraud.

I support this legislation, because of the honorable sacrifices our veterans have made for us, it is particularly important that we protect them from fraud and ensure the integrity of the system of benefits we provide for them.

H.R. 4676 amends the federal criminal code to declare that any person who knowingly engages in any scheme or artifice to defraud a veteran of veterans' benefits, or in connection with obtaining veteran's benefits for that veteran, shall be fined, imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

Currently, there are approximately 21 million veterans of the United States military living all across our country.

It is estimated that about 30 percent of all Vietnam veterans have had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and up to 20 percent of veterans serving in more recent conflicts in the Middle East are estimated to suffer from PTSD in a given year.

Given the extreme sacrifice by our veterans and the hardships many of them continue to face after their military service, it is our duty to provide, to the best of our ability, an appropriate measure of compensation for them—particularly for those in need.

For instance, we provide disability payments to those with service-connected disabilities, pensions for veterans with limited incomes, education and training under the GI Bill, and also various life insurance benefits.

Over 24,000 veterans reside in my 18th Congressional District and one of my top priorities is to fight for their benefits and to fight for the rights of our most patriotic Americans.

Amending title 18, United States Code of H.R. 4676, provides an additional tool to prevent certain frauds against veterans.

H.R. 4676 will ensure that prosecutors may bring criminal charges against those who knowingly defraud a veteran of their benefits or engage in fraud in connection with obtaining veterans' benefits.

476,515 veterans are living with PTSD, and need their benefits to provide the top care for their disorder; it is criminal that some are left untreated.

H.R. 4676 will bring justice to our veterans and shine a light on those who are abusing

the benefits given to veterans for defending our country.

Those who defraud veterans and the system of veterans' benefits harm the victims and diminish resources required to pay the claims and fund the programs that are needed to help those who have served their country.

I urge all Members to join me in voting to pass H.R. 4676.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4676, 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.

Mr. ROONEY of Florida. 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.

□ 1715

GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY ACT OF 2016

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1567) to authorize a comprehensive, strategic approach for United States foreign assistance to developing countries to reduce global poverty and hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, promote inclusive, sustainable agricultural-led economic growth, improve nutritional outcomes, especially for women and children, build resilience among vulnerable populations, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1567

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 "Global Food Security Act of 2016".

SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY OBJECTIVES; SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY OBJECTIVES.—It is in the national security interest of the United States to promote global food security, resilience, and nutrition, consistent with national food security investment plans, which is reinforced through programs, activities, and initiatives that—

(1) accelerate inclusive, agricultural-led economic growth that reduces global poverty, hunger, and malnutrition, particularly among women and children;

(2) increase the productivity, incomes, and livelihoods of small-scale producers, especially women, by working across agricultural value chains, enhancing local capacity to manage agricultural resources effectively, and expanding producer access to local and international markets;

(3) build resilience to food shocks among vulnerable populations and households while reducing reliance upon emergency food assistance;

(4) create an enabling environment for agricultural growth and investment, including

through the promotion of secure and transparent property rights;

(5) improve the nutritional status of women and children, with a focus on reducing child stunting, including through the promotion of highly nutritious foods, diet diversification, and nutritional behaviors that improve maternal and child health;

(6) align with and leverage broader United States strategies and investments in trade, economic growth, science and technology, agricultural research and extension, maternal and child health, nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene;

(7) continue to strengthen partnerships between United States-based universities, including land-grant colleges and universities, and institutions in target countries and communities that build agricultural capacity; and

(8) ensure the effective use of United States taxpayer dollars to further these objectives.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the President, in providing assistance to implement the Global Food Security Strategy, should—

(1) coordinate, through a whole-of-government approach, the efforts of relevant Federal departments and agencies to implement the Global Food Security Strategy;

(2) seek to fully utilize the unique capabilities of each relevant Federal department and agency while collaborating with and leveraging the contributions of other key stakeholders; and

(3) utilize open and streamlined solicitations to allow for the participation of a wide range of implementing partners through the most appropriate procurement mechanisms, which may include grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, and other instruments as necessary and appropriate.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) AGRICULTURE.—The term "agriculture" means crops, livestock, fisheries, and forestry.

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

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

(D) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives;

(E) the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives; and

(F) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(3) FEED THE FUTURE INNOVATION LABS.—The term "Feed the Future Innovation Labs" means research partnerships led by United States universities that advance solutions to reduce global hunger, poverty, and malnutrition.

(4) FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY.—The term "food and nutrition security" means access to, and availability, utilization, and stability of, sufficient food to meet caloric and nutritional needs for an active and healthy life.

(5) GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY.—The term "Global Food Security Strategy" means the strategy developed and implemented pursuant to section 4(a).

(6) KEY STAKEHOLDERS.—The term "key stakeholders" means actors engaged in efforts to advance global food security programs and objectives, including—

(A) relevant Federal departments and agencies;

(B) national and local governments in target countries;