

honored to be able to recognize him for his outstanding military service and his extraordinary life.

So today, my thoughts are with Ray's family. I pray they find comfort as they celebrate the life of this remarkable man.

CENTRAL INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

(Ms. ADAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association.

Founded in 1912, the CIAA is our Nation's first historically Black collegiate athletic conference and one of our country's oldest athletic conferences. The CIAA is being held in Charlotte, North Carolina, this week, which I have the pleasure of representing.

As co-chair of the Bipartisan Congressional HBCU Caucus, I am proud of the mission of the CIAA, which encourages educational advancements for student athletes, promotes positive competitive sportsmanship, and highlights HBCUs and other member institutions.

The Queen City has hosted this conference for more than 10 years, and the CIAA has had a positive impact on Charlotte's economy over the last decade, generating more than \$325 million. It continues to generate more than \$55 million annually. CIAA's sponsors, along with the city of Charlotte, have also provided \$1.5 million annually in scholarship funding for member schools.

I thank CIAA for being such a positive force in the Charlotte area, and for students, families, and supporters across the country. I wish the best to all of the male and female athletes competing for titles this week.

AIPM ACT/NATIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES WEEK

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of National Invasive Species Awareness Week, this is a great opportunity to call attention to the more than 4,300 invasive species that harm our domestic agriculture, local landowners, and communities throughout the United States.

So, what are invasive species?

In my home State of Hawaii, the coffee berry borer, coconut rhinoceros beetle, macadamia nut felted coccid, and others cost our local economy millions and threaten our unique ecosystem, our agriculture and waterways, as well as our food supply and public health.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to combat the thousands of noxious species that are present across the country. That is why I strongly encourage my colleagues to cosponsor and

pass H.R. 3893, a bill I sponsored, the Areawide Integrated Pest Management Act, which would bring local stakeholders together with researchers and other key players in order to find sustainable, cost-effective, and comprehensive solutions that will better help all of us to manage and prevent the spread of these harmful pests and invasive species.

DEADLINE FOR A STRATEGY TO COMBAT ISLAMIC EXTREMISM

(Mr. LAHOOD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, last week the Obama administration failed to meet a congressionally mandated deadline to submit a strategy to combat Islamic terrorism.

To comply with the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, President Obama was required to submit to Congress a comprehensive strategy to defeat ISIS by Monday, February 15, 2016. That was over a week ago. We still have not received his strategy. Confronting this threat is of utmost importance to the safety and security of the United States and our allies.

While there is an absence of leadership from our Commander in Chief, the House has taken several steps to keep America safe from terrorism. We passed the Visa Waiver Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act to help prevent foreign terrorists from entering the United States. We also passed the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act, a bill to pause the government's Syrian refugee program.

Just yesterday the House passed two additional measures to ensure our Federal agencies are working to disrupt the travel of terrorists and those seeking help from terrorists.

The House alone cannot keep America safe. We need action from this administration, and submitting an incomplete plan to remove dangerous terrorists to the United States from Guantanamo Bay doesn't count. It just threatens our security more. ISIS is a very grave threat that is clearly not contained.

Today I urge the President to comply with the National Defense Authorization Act and submit a plan to Congress.

HEALTH SAVINGS ACT GIVES MORE FLEXIBILITY TO MEET HEALTH CARE NEEDS

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, hard-working families in Minnesota and around the country want more flexibility, more choice, and lower costs when it comes to their own health care. Instead of a top-down approach,

patients should be able to work with their doctor to determine what is best to meet their health care needs.

One of the best tools to provide more flexibility for patients are health savings accounts and flexible spending accounts. HSAs and FSAs are a great way to save for future medical expenses.

However, due to certain loopholes in current law, employers are often discouraged from contributing to their employees' accounts. That is why I have introduced legislation, the Health Savings Act, that would remove this loophole and encourage companies to contribute directly to their employees' HSAs and FSAs.

The bill also would bring in seniors and Active Duty military personnel into the mix by allowing contributions to be made to those accounts under Medicare and TRICARE. It also makes commonsense fixes to the current rules regarding HSAs and FSAs. For instance, patients would now be able to purchase over-the-counter medications such as aspirin or allergy medicine without getting a prescription from their doctor first.

Mr. Speaker, let's give the American people more choice and more flexibility. Let's pass the Health Savings Act.

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.

ERIC WILLIAMS CORRECTIONAL OFFICER PROTECTION ACT OF 2015

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 238) to amend title 18, United States Code, to authorize the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to issue oleoresin capsicum spray to officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 238

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 "Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE BUREAU OF PRISONS AUTHORIZED TO CARRY OLEORESIN CAPSICUM SPRAY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 303 of part III of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 4049. Officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons authorized to carry oleoresin capsicum spray

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Bureau of Prisons shall issue, on a routine basis, oleoresin capsicum spray to—

“(1) any officer or employee of the Bureau of Prisons who—

“(A) is employed in a prison that is not a minimum or low security prison; and

“(B) may respond to an emergency situation in such a prison; and

“(2) to such additional officers and employees of prisons as the Director determines appropriate, in accordance with this section.

“(b) TRAINING REQUIREMENT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In order for an officer or employee of the Bureau of Prisons, including a correctional officer, to be eligible to receive and carry oleoresin capsicum spray pursuant to this section, the officer or employee shall complete a training course before being issued such spray, and annually thereafter, on the use of oleoresin capsicum spray.

“(2) TRANSFERABILITY OF TRAINING.—An officer or employee of the Bureau of Prisons who completes a training course pursuant to paragraph (1) and subsequently transfers to employment at a different prison, shall not be required to complete an additional training course solely due such transfer.

“(3) TRAINING CONDUCTED DURING REGULAR EMPLOYMENT.—An officer or employee of the Bureau of Prisons who completes a training course required under paragraph (1) shall do so during the course of that officer or employee's regular employment, and shall be compensated at the same rate that the officer or employee would be compensated for conducting the officer or employee's regular duties.

“(c) USE OF OLEORESIN CAPSICUM SPRAY.—Officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons issued oleoresin capsicum spray pursuant to subsection (a) may use such spray to reduce acts of violence—

“(1) committed by prisoners against themselves, other prisoners, prison visitors, and officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons; and

“(2) committed by prison visitors against themselves, prisoners, other visitors, and officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 303 of part III of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 4048 the following:

“4049. Officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons authorized to carry oleoresin capsicum spray.”.

SEC. 3. GAO REPORT.

Not later than the date that is 3 years after the date on which the Director of the Bureau of Prisons begins to issue oleoresin capsicum spray to officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons pursuant to section 4049 of title 18, United States Code, as added by this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report that includes the following:

(1) An evaluation of the effectiveness of issuing oleoresin capsicum spray to officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons in prisons that are not minimum or low security prisons on—

(A) reducing crime in such prisons; and

(B) reducing acts of violence committed by prisoners against themselves, other prisoners, prison visitors, and officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons in such prisons.

(2) An evaluation of the advisability of issuing oleoresin capsicum spray to officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons in prisons that are minimum or low security prisons, including—

(A) the effectiveness that issuing such spray in such prisons would have on reducing acts of violence committed by prisoners against themselves, other prisoners, prison

visitors, and officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons in such prisons; and

(B) the cost of issuing such spray in such prisons.

(3) Recommendations to improve the safety of officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons in prisons.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) 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 S. 238, 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.

Today I rise in support of S. 238, the Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act of 2015.

Eric Williams was born on August 24, 1978, in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Donald and Jean Williams. Eric spent most of his life in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, where he attended the Nanticoke public schools and graduated from Greater Nanticoke Area High School in 1996.

Eric was an avid soccer player. He played youth soccer, was a member of the high school team, and continued playing in adult leagues. In addition, to his love of soccer, Eric was an avid sportsman. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and bowling.

Eric graduated with a criminal justice degree from King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and was a graduate of Lackawanna College's police program. He went on to become a security specialist and then a police officer with Jefferson Township, Pennsylvania.

In September of 2011, Eric began his career as a corrections officer at the U.S. Penitentiary in Canaan. In his spare time, he volunteered by visiting jails, talking to inmates about health and spiritual issues.

On the night of February 25, 2013—3 years ago tomorrow—Eric was supervising more than 100 high-security inmates at the USP in Canaan. While making his rounds for nightly lockdown just before 10 p.m., inmate and gang member Jesse Con-ui launched an unprovoked, brutal, and cowardly attack against Senior Officer Williams. Con-ui knocked Eric down a staircase, fracturing his skull. He proceeded to stab Eric more than 200 times with a homemade prison shank.

When authorities found Eric's body, he had only a set of keys, a pair of handcuffs, and a handheld radio on him, clearly not enough to defend him-

self against such a brutal attack. Eric was 34 years old when he was murdered.

The Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act of 2015 will ensure that our brave corrections officers have the necessary equipment to properly defend themselves from this type of attack in the future.

S. 238 requires the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to issue pepper spray to any Bureau of Prisons officer or employee who may have to respond to an emergency situation to reduce acts of violence committed by prisoners.

□ 1230

This is a much-needed piece of legislation to ensure the safety and security of Bureau of Prisons employees as well as the inmates in their facilities. This bill passed the Senate 2 months ago and, if passed today, will be presented to the President.

I want to particularly thank Congressman MARINO, who represents the district where Eric lived and who has been a staunch advocate for making pepper spray available to Bureau of Prisons employees.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important piece of legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, as the senior member of the House Judiciary Committee and as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, as the Representative of Houston, I am privileged to be able to support this legislation, legislation that, I am very glad to say, had been included in our draft prison bill, a bipartisan bill. But because of the urgency of this matter, I am very glad to be on the floor of the House with the cosponsors, sponsors, and the chairman of the full committee, Mr. GOODLATTE; and the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. CONYERS, as well, joins in the importance of this effort.

My heart aches for Eric Williams' family, and it aches for the circumstance that caused him to lose his life. Obviously, this young man was committed to public safety, the criminal justice system, and, in fact, the rehabilitation of those who were incarcerated, even in high-risk circumstances.

I rise to support S. 238, the Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act of 2015, to make sure that this provision, providing a tool of safety for these brave corrections officers, does not go out of existence.

I want to extend my thanks again to Judiciary Chairman GOODLATTE and Ranking Member CONYERS, as I indicated, for their ongoing, bipartisan leadership.

But again, let me refer back to Eric Williams, the namesake of this legislation and the tragedy of his death. I want to offer my sympathy to the family members and to again say that this death did not have to happen.

As I discuss the bill, I want to make the point that we should not short-change the resources needed for the men and women who are on the front lines of protecting us and securing a criminal justice system to make it work. In this instance, that is what happened.

A death had occurred earlier, but the pilot program did not reach to Eric's facility, and that is inexcusable. But, fortunately, this permanent adding or expanding of this bill will make sure that every high-risk facility under the Bureau of Prisons will have this pepper spray.

The Judiciary Committee unanimously passed the groundbreaking prison reform bill, as I said, 2 weeks ago. This measure was included.

S. 238 codifies a pilot program that has increased Federal prison safety nationwide. It is crucial. However, it is set to expire in a few days, and I look forward to my colleagues bringing forth the criminal justice bill.

It is important to move this bill now. Tomorrow marks 3 years since the death of Correctional Officer Eric Williams, who was stabbed by an inmate at a high-security facility. He was working alone, as I said, with 100 inmates, high risk. Armed with only a radio, keys, and handcuffs, he was unable to defend himself against the aggressive attack. If Officer Williams was equipped with pepper spray, then he might still be here with us today.

Passing S. 238 will honor Officer Williams. The provisions of this bill require BOP to issue oleoresin capsicum spray, known as pepper spray, to certain staff at a higher security prison. This requirement is truly common sense and does not apply to minimum or low-security facilities. It only applies to staff that may respond to an emergency situation in the prison.

S. 238 includes critical safeguards to ensure pepper spray is used appropriately and only when necessary to prevent acts of violence, it is determined that pepper spray is not dangerous, only in limited circumstances.

The legislation requires the officer or employee to complete a pepper spray training course before being issued the spray, annually thereafter.

It establishes parameters for using the spray, and it may only be used to reduce acts of violence. In doing so, S. 238 makes it clear that pepper spray may not be used to punish or coerce inmates, or in an excessive, inappropriate fashion.

Finally, let me say that it is with sadness, but with pleasure, that we provide this legislation and move it quickly so that we can provide that permanent armor, if you will, to protect these officers who are dealing with high-risk inmates.

I ask my colleagues to support this legislation.

As a senior Member of the House Judiciary Committee; as the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations; as the represent-

ative from Houston and as a co-sponsor of legislation that includes this same measure, I rise in support of S. 238, the "Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act of 2015."

Let me extend my thanks to Judiciary Chairman GOODLATTE and Ranking Member CONYERS for their ongoing leadership on bipartisan criminal justice reform.

When the Judiciary Committee unanimously passed a groundbreaking prison reform bill just two weeks ago, that bill included the measure before us today.

S. 238 codifies a pilot program that has increased federal prison safety nationwide.

This crucial program, however, is set to expire in just a few days.

While I look forward to working with my colleagues to bring our bipartisan criminal justice reform bills before this Chamber soon, we must pass S. 238 now to avoid letting this important program expire.

Tomorrow marks three years since the death of Correctional Officer Eric Williams, who was stabbed by an inmate at a high security facility in Waymart, PA.

Officer Williams was working alone in a unit of more than 100 inmates.

Armed only with a radio, keys, and handcuffs, he was unable to defend himself against the aggressive attack.

If Officer Williams was equipped with pepper spray, then he might still be here with us today.

Passing S. 238 will honor Officer Williams. The Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act of 2015 provides officers in higher security facilities with the means to protect themselves when necessary.

S. 238 requires BOP to issue oleoresin capsicum spray, known as pepper spray, to certain staff at higher security prisons.

This requirement is truly common sense: it does not apply to minimum or low security facilities; and it only applies to staff that "may respond to an emergency situation" in the prison.

S. 238 includes critical safeguards to ensure pepper spray is used appropriately and only when necessary to prevent acts of violence.

Specifically, this legislation: requires the officer or employee to complete a pepper spray training course before being issued the spray, and annually thereafter; and establishes perimeters for using the spray—it may only be used to reduce acts of violence committed by prisoners against themselves or others.

In doing so, S. 238 makes it clear that pepper spray may not be used to punish or coerce inmates, or in an excessive and inappropriate fashion.

The need to provide permanent protective equipment cannot be overstated.

Mass incarceration has led to dangerously overcrowded federal prisons.

Such conditions can frequently lead, or at least contribute to, unnecessary violence.

High and medium security level facilities make up 42 percent of the total BOP population.

In FY2013 these facilities were operating 52 percent and 45 percent over capacity, respectively.

Officers in these facilities must be equipped to protect themselves and others.

In 2010, there were almost 1,700 assaults on BOP staff—about 49 per 5,000 inmates.

BOP requires officers on regular duty to carry a radio, body alarm, and keys.

Outside the pilot program and aside from emergency situations and special teams, officers do not carry pepper spray or batons.

Officers must rely on communication skills and training to de-escalate confrontations.

These are critically important skills and we know that our well-trained federal correctional officers are generally able to use these skills to avoid violence.

In some instances, however, these skills may not be enough and, when they are not, these officers must not be defenseless.

The issuance of pepper spray, alongside proper training, will go a long way to assisting these officers when all else fails.

We ask a lot of federal correctional officers.

We support these officers with training and skills, but that is not always enough.

When faced with acts of violence against themselves and others, they must be well-positioned to cut that violence short.

It is therefore vital that we pass S. 238 now.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to join me; the National Association of Police Organizations; Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association; American Federation of Government Employees, and Council of Prison Locals; in supporting the Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act of 2015.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MARINO), a member of the Judiciary Committee and a subcommittee chairman who has been an advocate on this issue and whose district was directly impacted by the murder of Eric Williams.

Mr. MARINO. I thank Chairman GOODLATTE for bringing this legislation to the floor, and I thank Mr. CONYERS for supporting this as well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act.

I was not fortunate enough to know Eric Williams while he lived, but, as I have met and worked with his parents, his coworkers and friends, I have come to grasp the depth of his loss to them all.

As the chairman stated before me, on the night he was brutally murdered, Eric was alone and outnumbered, over 100 to 1, in a high-security Federal penitentiary.

USP Canaan, where Eric was murdered, is one of three such high-security institutions in my congressional district. And I might add that Congressman GOODLATTE and I toured the facilities at Lewisburg and at Allenwood several months ago and saw firsthand what takes place there. In each of them, corrections officers and other prison staff are constantly outnumbered while they work among the most violent criminals in the Federal prison system.

Until the BOP implemented its OC spray pilot program, each of these correctional officers was also completely unarmed. Inmates, on the other hand, constantly find ingenious ways to fabricate weapons for use against BOP employees and other inmates.

But, as I have visited and met with corrections officers at USP Canaan,

FCC Allenwood, and USP Lewisburg, I have heard firsthand accounts why OC spray is a necessary tool for their job. It is a sign of why this proven pilot program must be permanently authorized.

I want to thank Chairman GOODLATTE for his support and assistance on this critical piece of legislation, and my colleagues sitting with me here today and on the other side of the aisle. Over many months now, he and the staff have worked with mine to ensure that we bring this to the floor.

I also want to thank my colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator TOOMEY, for his efforts to push the bill through the Senate.

While straightforward and short, the bill means life and/or death for corrections officers and BOP employees across the Nation. The loss of Eric Williams and two other Federal corrections officers in recent years is tragic and absolutely preventable.

Tomorrow, February 25, marks 3 years since Eric's death. To honor his service and his memory, I urge my colleagues to do right for those who protect us and support this bill.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA).

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act.

First, let me explain the title of the bill.

Eric Williams was a constituent of mine from Nanticoke, a senior correctional officer at the U.S. Prison at Canaan in Waymart, Pennsylvania, which is just outside of my district. On February 25, 2013, that is 3 years ago tomorrow, Eric Williams was working in the prison when he was suddenly attacked by an inmate. The inmate knocked Officer Williams down a flight of steps. He then stabbed him more than 200 times with a homemade shank. That inmate is now charged with first degree murder, first degree murder of a United States corrections officer, and possessing contraband in prison. Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty.

Needless to say, at the time of the attack, Officer Williams was unarmed. Now, it makes sense that officers don't carry firearms into areas where inmates could gain access to them, but this bill tells the Bureau of Prisons to supply pepper spray to prison officers or other employees who could be involved in emergency situations with inmates.

If Officer Williams had been equipped with pepper spray 3 years ago, he might have been able to defend himself against that cowardly, ambush-style attack, and perhaps he would be alive today. This will give correctional officers that fighting chance that Officer Williams did not have.

I have had the privilege of meeting with Eric Williams' parents, Don and

Jean. They are now part of an organization called Voices of JOE. The letters of J-O-E stand for Jose Rivera, Osvaldo Albarati, and Eric Williams. They were killed because of their jobs in the correctional system.

For them, Mr. Speaker, and all of our correctional officers who risk their lives every day, I urge support of the bill.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MCKINLEY), who is the chief sponsor of the House version of this bill.

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 238, the Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act, and urge its immediate adoption.

Two years ago, our office met with the family of Eric Williams. We heard the tragic story of how he was brutally murdered in the line of duty at the penitentiary at Canaan.

In coordination with Senator TOOMEY's office, we then introduced the bill, in concert with Congressmen BARLETTA and MARINO, the companion bill in the House. We reintroduced it again this past year and are thrilled that the Toomey bill has passed the Senate and has come before the House today. This bill will permanently authorize Federal correction officers to routinely carry pepper spray in medium-, high-, and maximum-security prisons.

Think about what we heard a minute ago. At the time of his death, Officer Williams was only equipped with a radio, a set of keys, and some handcuffs.

Any worker should feel safe and secure when they go to work, but that is not the case in our Federal correctional institutions. These men and women have no line of defense against conflicts within the prison walls. This bill will go far in providing Federal correctional workers a much-needed tool so that they may defend themselves and others if attacked by violent prison inmates.

I thank the Judiciary Committee and leadership for their quick action in bringing this issue to the floor, and I urge all my colleagues to honor the memory of Officer Eric Williams by voting "yes" and sending this bill to the President's desk.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time to close.

□ 1245

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, let me state the obvious. All of us are appalled and saddened by the loss of this correctional officer. We express again our sadness and sympathy to his family although 3 years later. Eric Williams did not deserve to die.

Our Federal prisons across America are dangerously overcrowded. Such conditions can frequently lead or at least contribute to unnecessary violence. High- and medium-level security facilities make up 42 percent of the total Bureau of Prisons population.

In FY 2013, these facilities were operating 52 percent and 45 percent over capacity, respectively. Officers in these facilities must be equipped to protect themselves.

In 2010, there were almost 1,700 assaults on BOP staff and about 49 per 5,000 inmates. BOP requires officers of regular duty to carry a radio, body alarm, and keys.

Outside the pilot program and aside from the emergency situation and special teams, officers do not carry pepper spray all the time. Officers must rely on communication skills and training to deescalate confrontations. Sometimes that is not enough. These are important skills.

We know that well-trained Federal correctional officers are generally able to use these skills to avoid violence, but not all the time. We must not have one single time where we have an officer at the risk of losing their life and they have no protection.

In some instances, however, these skills may not be enough. When they are not, these officers must not be defenseless. Issuance of pepper spray alongside proper training will go a long way to assist these officers.

We ask a lot of Federal correctional officers. In the comments made about Mr. Williams, he was engaged in counseling and rehabilitation discussions.

We support these officers with training and skills. We do expect for them to interact. When faced with acts of violence against themselves and others, they must be well positioned to cut that violence short.

So I ask my colleges to join in passing S. 238. I thank the author of the bill who persisted in introducing it on many occasions, my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee, including Mr. MARINO, and others, our chairman and ranking member.

I urge my colleagues to join me, the National Association of Police Organizations, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the American Federation of Government Employees, and the Council of Prison Locals in supporting the Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act of 2015.

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

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

Very simply, a few weeks ago I had the opportunity to meet Mr. and Mrs. Williams, Eric's parents. They came to the House Judiciary Committee on the day that we marked up our prison reform legislation and included matters related to protecting the security officers in that legislation.

They came after Eric had been brutally murdered. So they knew that

nothing they did there that day would save him, that he had already been lost. But they came for one important reason. They don't want to see that happen to any other Federal prison security guards anywhere anytime. They strongly support this legislation.

I ask my colleagues to pass this legislation in Eric Williams' name and out of respect for the concern his parents have that officers who serve their country in our Federal prisons are kept safe.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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 Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 238.

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.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3624, FRAUDULENT JOINDER PREVENTION ACT OF 2016

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 618 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 618

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3624) to amend title 28, United States Code, to prevent fraudulent joinder. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such

amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on House Resolution 618, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring forward this rule on behalf of the Rules Committee.

It is a structured rule that provides 1 hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee for H.R. 3624, the Fraudulent Joinder Prevention Act of 2016.

In addition to consideration of H.R. 3624, the House will also debate and vote on two amendments on the House floor.

Yesterday the Rules Committee received testimony from the sponsor of the bill and a minority representative of the Judiciary Committee. Subcommittee hearings were held on this legislation, and it was marked up and reported by the Judiciary Committee. This bill went through regular order and enjoyed meaningful discussion at the subcommittee and full committee level.

H.R. 3624 is strongly supported by the National Federation of Independent Business and the Chamber of Commerce because of the significance of this issue to small businesses in northeast Georgia and across the Nation.

This legislation will protect innocent local parties, often small businessowners, from being dragged into expensive lawsuits. It achieves this goal in two specific ways.

First, the bill empowers judges to exercise greater discretion to free an innocent local party from a case where the judge finds there is no plausible case against that party.

It applies the same plausibility standard that the Supreme Court has

said should be used to dismiss pleadings for failing to state a valid legal claim, and we believe the same standard should apply to release innocent parties from lawsuits.

Second, the bill allows judges to look at evidence that the trial lawyers aren't acting in good faith in adding local defendants. This is a standard some lower courts already use to determine whether a trial lawyer really intends to pursue claims against the local defendant or is just using them as part of their forum shopping strategy.

It is important to emphasize that Congress has the authority to regulate the jurisdiction of the lower Federal courts. The present standard has been described as poorly defined and subject to inconsistent interpretation and application and the consequences significant and real.

H.R. 3624 is consistent with the views of our Founding Fathers and the principles of federalism enshrined in the Judiciary Act of 1789.

I would like to thank Chairman GOODLATTE, Congressman BUCK, and their staff for their work in bringing forth this important litigation reform.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this rule and in strong opposition to the underlying legislation. In short, this is a lousy bill.

At the end of last year, Republicans and Democrats came together to pass four major pieces of legislation that were sent to President Obama's desk and enacted into law.

We passed a bipartisan budget agreement, a multiyear tax package, a highway bill, and legislation to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that had all been stalled for years.

That is how Congress is supposed to work, Mr. Speaker. Quite frankly, I thought at the end of last year that maybe these successes would be contagious and that it would become the norm to actually work together in a bipartisan way and to pass meaningful legislation that would actually become law.

But this Republican leadership, I am sad to say, has returned from the holiday break with more of the same tired ideas and partisan legislation that is going nowhere. We are wasting time with this legislation today, which is going nowhere. We are wasting taxpayer dollars spending our time dealing with legislation that is going nowhere.

Instead of considering legislation to create jobs, boost our economy, or lift struggling Americans out of poverty,