

This bill has strong bipartisan support from the committee.

Madam Speaker, I urge Members to support this bill. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TORRES of New York. Madam Speaker, DHS is a sprawling \$50 billion Federal agency with a diverse array of mission sets. As such, it is critical that, every 4 years, DHS carry out a rigorous bottom-up, risk-informed review of the entire department that reflects robust engagement with Homeland Security partners to produce a QHSR that can drive the department's strategic vision for years to come.

Enactment of H.R. 370 will help ensure that happens and that, in the years ahead, DHS better aligns its budgets and programs with its ever-expanding missions.

An identical version of this measure passed the House last Congress by a vote of 415-0.

Madam Speaker, I urge the passage of H.R. 370 and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. TORRES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 370.

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. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

HOMELAND SECURITY ACQUISITION PROFESSIONAL CAREER PROGRAM ACT

Mr. TORRES of New York. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 367) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish an acquisition professional career program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 367

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 "Homeland Security Acquisition Professional Career Program Act".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF THE ACQUISITION PROFESSIONAL CAREER PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title VII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 341 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 711. ACQUISITION PROFESSIONAL CAREER PROGRAM.

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Department an acquisition professional career program to develop a cadre of acquisition professionals within the Department.

"(b) ADMINISTRATION.—The Under Secretary for Management shall administer the

acquisition professional career program established pursuant to subsection (a).

"(c) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—The Under Secretary for Management shall carry out the following with respect to the acquisition professional career program.

"(1) Designate the occupational series, grades, and number of acquisition positions throughout the Department to be included in the program and manage centrally such positions.

"(2) Establish and publish on the Department's website eligibility criteria for candidates to participate in the program.

"(3) Carry out recruitment efforts to attract candidates—

"(A) from institutions of higher education, including such institutions with established acquisition specialties and courses of study, historically Black colleges and universities, and Hispanic-serving institutions;

"(B) with diverse work experience outside of the Federal Government; or

"(C) with military service.

"(4) Hire eligible candidates for designated positions under the program.

"(5) Develop a structured program comprised of acquisition training, on-the-job experience, Department-wide rotations, mentorship, shadowing, and other career development opportunities for program participants.

"(6) Provide, beyond required training established for program participants, additional specialized acquisition training, including small business contracting and innovative acquisition techniques training.

"(d) REPORTS.—Not later than December 31, 2021, and annually thereafter through 2027, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the acquisition professional career program. Each such report shall include the following information:

"(1) The number of candidates approved for the program.

"(2) The number of candidates who commenced participation in the program, including generalized information on such candidates' backgrounds with respect to education and prior work experience, but not including personally identifiable information.

"(3) A breakdown of the number of participants hired under the program by type of acquisition position.

"(4) A list of Department components and offices that participated in the program and information regarding length of time of each program participant in each rotation at such components or offices.

"(5) Program attrition rates and post-program graduation retention data, including information on how such data compare to the prior year's data, as available.

"(6) The Department's recruiting efforts for the program.

"(7) The Department's efforts to promote retention of program participants.

"(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION.—The term 'Hispanic-serving institution' has the meaning given such term in section 502 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1101a).

"(2) HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.—The term 'historically Black colleges and universities' has the meaning given the term 'part B institution' in section 322(2) of Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1061(2)).

"(3) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term 'institution of higher education' has the meaning given such term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 710 the following new item:

"Sec. 711. Acquisition professional career program."

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. TORRES).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TORRES of New York. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. TORRES of New York. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 367, the Homeland Security Acquisition Professional Career Program Act.

H.R. 367 authorizes the Department of Homeland Security's Acquisition Professional Career Program which, since 2008, has been credited with helping DHS onboard over 300 new hires into its acquisition workforce.

At DHS, acquisition professionals, such as contract specialists, are responsible for spending billions of dollars each year on the goods and services needed for the department to carry out its missions. They acquire everything from disaster relief supplies for FEMA to Coast Guard cutters and software designed to protect Federal Government networks from cyber threats.

Unfortunately, when it comes to hiring and retaining acquisitions professionals, DHS has experienced chronic staffing shortages that, in the view of the Government Accountability Office, create a persistent challenge for DHS that can negatively affect the ability of DHS to acquire vital capabilities on time and on budget.

H.R. 367 seeks to address this challenge by codifying DHS' rigorous development program in which participants are provided with acquisition training, mentorship, department-wide rotations, and other career development opportunities.

Enactment of this measure will help DHS maintain a pipeline for its acquisition workforce to directly support the department's frontline officers and provide them with the tools that they need.

A prior version of this bill passed the House by a voice vote last September on a bipartisan basis.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to once again support this legislation. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 367, the Homeland Security Acquisition Professional Career Program Act. This legislation will help create a pipeline for the Department of Homeland Security to better recruit talented acquisition professionals.

This critical program is an important step to making DHS more agile and efficient in its role of protecting our Nation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 367.

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

Mr. TORRES of New York. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Nevada for her leadership on this bill.

Americans look to DHS to respond after a disaster, prevent terrorism, and protect cyberspace. Within DHS, its leaders at every level of the organization look to the acquisition workforce to ensure that the department has the tools needed to get the job done.

Since 2008, DHS' Acquisition Professional Career Program has created a vital pipeline for the department to hire acquisitions professionals who develop their knowledge and skills in house at DHS.

Enactment of H.R. 367 would ensure that DHS is able to continue to run this successful program which the department has come to rely on to help address chronic staffing shortages within its acquisition workforce.

Again, I want to thank and commend the gentlewoman, Congresswoman TITUS from Nevada, who is presently presiding over the House, for her leadership on H.R. 367.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 367. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 367, the "Homeland Security Acquisition Professional Career Program Act," which establishes in the Department of Homeland Security an acquisition professional career program to develop a cadre of acquisition professionals.

Acquisition professionals work in one of six career fields, each of which plays a vital role in Department Acquisition.

The six Acquisition career fields include:

1. Contract Specialist,
2. Program Manager,
3. Logistician,
4. Systems Engineer,
5. Industrial Engineer/Cost Estimator, and
6. IT Acquisition Specialist.

Homeland Security Acquisition Professional Career Program participants are appointed to rotational assignments within department components to gain experience in a wide variety of work environments.

The program is three years, and upon successful completion participants are placed into a permanent full-time position at the GS-12 grade.

Job applications to the Department of Homeland Security go through multiple levels of review.

Human Resources Specialists screen applications to determine whether basic eligibility requirements are met for the position and rate

applications according to the additional qualifications listed in the job announcement.

If the application rates among the best qualified, it will be forwarded to the hiring manager who will make the final selection.

Selection procedures are subject to Federal Civil Service laws, which ensures that all applicants receive fair and equal treatment in the hiring process.

Acquisition Professionals are responsible for nearly \$20 billion in annual purchases for the Department of Homeland Security.

The Management Directorate shall administer this essential program, including carrying out recruitment efforts and providing specialized acquisition training.

I ask my colleagues to join me in voting for passage of H.R. 367.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. TORRES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 367.

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. BIGGS. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY MENTOR-PROTEGE PROGRAM ACT OF 2021

Mr. TORRES of New York. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 408) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a mentor-protégé program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 408

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 "Department of Homeland Security Mentor-Protégé Program Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle H of title VIII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 451 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 890B. MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM.

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Department a mentor-protégé program (in this section referred to as the 'Program') under which a mentor firm enters into an agreement with a protégé firm for the purpose of assisting the protégé firm to compete for prime contracts and subcontracts of the Department.

"(b) ELIGIBILITY.—The Secretary shall establish criteria for mentor firms and protégé firms to be eligible to participate in the Program, including a requirement that a firm is not included on any list maintained by the Federal Government of contractors that have been suspended or debarred.

"(c) PROGRAM APPLICATION AND APPROVAL.—

"(1) APPLICATION.—The Secretary, acting through the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization of the Department, shall establish a process for submission of an application jointly by a mentor firm and the protégé firm selected by the mentor firm. The application shall include each of the following:

"(A) A description of the assistance to be provided by the mentor firm, including, to the extent available, the number and a brief description of each anticipated subcontract to be awarded to the protégé firm.

"(B) A schedule with milestones for achieving the assistance to be provided over the period of participation in the Program.

"(C) An estimate of the costs to be incurred by the mentor firm for providing assistance under the Program.

"(D) Attestations that Program participants will submit to the Secretary reports at times specified by the Secretary to assist the Secretary in evaluating the protégé firm's developmental progress.

"(E) Attestations that Program participants will inform the Secretary in the event of a change in eligibility or voluntary withdrawal from the Program.

"(2) APPROVAL.—Not later than 60 days after receipt of an application pursuant to paragraph (1), the head of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization shall notify applicants of approval or, in the case of disapproval, the process for resubmitting an application for reconsideration.

"(3) RESCISSION.—The head of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization may rescind the approval of an application under this subsection if it determines that such action is in the best interest of the Department.

"(d) PROGRAM DURATION.—A mentor firm and protégé firm approved under subsection (c) shall enter into an agreement to participate in the Program for a period of not less than 36 months.

"(e) PROGRAM BENEFITS.—A mentor firm and protégé firm that enter into an agreement under subsection (d) may receive the following Program benefits:

"(1) With respect to an award of a contract that requires a subcontracting plan, a mentor firm may receive evaluation credit for participating in the Program.

"(2) With respect to an award of a contract that requires a subcontracting plan, a mentor firm may receive credit for a protégé firm performing as a first tier subcontractor or a subcontractor at any tier in an amount equal to the total dollar value of any subcontracts awarded to such protégé firm.

"(3) A protégé firm may receive technical, managerial, financial, or any other mutually agreed upon benefit from a mentor firm, including a subcontract award.

"(f) REPORTING.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the head of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report that—

"(1) identifies each agreement between a mentor firm and a protégé firm entered into under this section, including the number of protégé firm participants that are—

"(A) small business concerns;

"(B) small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans;

"(C) small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans;

"(D) qualified HUBZone small business concerns;