

Other Americans are also suffering these same injustices inflicted by the Russian Government.

Paul Whelan, first arrested on baseless charges in December 2018, remains unjustly imprisoned and is serving a 16-year sentence.

The imprisonment of American citizens in Russia for political purposes, likely in an attempt to force the United States to release convicted Russian criminals and Putin cronies in the United States, is a despicable practice and an affront to human rights and the rule of law everywhere.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that President Biden, in his meeting with Vladimir Putin in Geneva, specifically demanded the release of Trevor Reed and Paul Whelan; and I am pleased that we, in Congress, are continuing to do the same with the consideration of this resolution.

The Kremlin must release Trevor Reed, Paul Whelan, and all others wrongfully detained in Russia so that they may finally return to their families. This is an important bill resolution. I support it, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, 682 days ago, my constituent, Trevor Reed of Granbury, Texas, was thrown into jail by the Russian Government for a crime he did not commit before being convicted in Russian kangaroo court. He is an Eagle Scout, a U.S. marine, and, more importantly, a beloved son and brother, who stands to endure a decade of his life in a Russian prison if we are unable to bring him home.

Trevor was initially detained for public intoxication, but when the Russian Federal Security Service discovered that he was a U.S. marine, they upped the charges and accused him of endangering the lives of police officers. The accusation and the lack of evidence to support it was so ridiculous that even a Russian judge erupted in laughter during his trial.

U.S. Ambassador John Sullivan said justice was not even considered in this case, and described Trevor's trial as a theater of the absurd.

His trial was a sham, and his treatment in the custody of Russian authorities has been nothing short of appalling. He has been denied medical care, counselor access, and has been repeatedly moved without prior or proper notification. Even when he was infected with COVID, the Russians cut off communication with our embassy and with his family. Vladimir Putin himself recently smeared Trevor Reed's name, further underscoring the reality that Trevor's detainment is, in fact, politically motivated.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member MICHAEL MCCAUL for partnering with me to introduce this resolution, and for the support of Chairman

MEEKS, and for our commitment together in a bipartisan way to stand up for Trevor and the entire Reed family and others who are unlawfully detained.

Mr. Speaker, the passage of this resolution could not be more timely than it is today. In fact, just today, a corrupt Russian appeals court rejected Trevor's final appeal certifying the absurd 9-year sentence.

Our message is simple: The United States will not tolerate an American citizen being held by the Putin regime as a political pawn.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join together and stand firm with Trevor and his family, to reunite Trevor and his family, and to bring him home. Free Trevor Reed.

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

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), a great patriot.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from west Texas for this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, recently, I created the Congressional Task Force on American Hostages and Americans Wrongfully Detained Abroad with my colleague, our good friend, TED DEUTCH from Florida. I thank Representative PFLUGER for being one of the first Members to join that task force.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I come and rise in support of my friend, Representative PFLUGER's resolution. This resolution calls for the release of Trevor Reed of Texas; and expresses support for Paul Whelan of Michigan, another American unjustly imprisoned in Russia.

From this debate, we have heard and learned some of the details of Trevor's arrest, sham trial, and absurd sentencing for his alleged crimes. All channels of the United States Government must engage with friends and enemies alike to ensure that Americans in situations like Trevor and Paul are brought home expeditiously.

This is especially the case for Members of Congress who represent the concerned families of those held hostage or wrongfully detained. Here in Congress, we must continue to collaborate with the administration in situations like these to disincentivize wrongful detention and taking hostage of Americans in the future.

Let this be a message to Trevor and Paul and their families: We are committed to bringing you back to the United States safely.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the full committee for his support of this effort and work. I also thank my friend from west Texas. I urge all my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the chairman and Ranking Member MCCAUL.

Mr. Speaker, the United States must send a strong message to Vladimir Putin that we will not tolerate a U.S. citizen and a marine veteran being held as a political pawn.

I, again, want to recognize those here in the Chamber who have supported this. Ranking Member MICHAEL MCCAUL from Texas, Mr. HILL from Arkansas, and others for partnering with me on the resolution, that we will not stand for any unlawful detention of any American.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the American families of those wrongfully detained by Russia are waiting for decisive action. Congress needs to stand united in support of Trevor Reed, Paul Whelan, and all those who have had to suffer terrible conditions and treatment by the Kremlin.

This resolution introduced by Mr. PFLUGER makes clear our resolute condemnation of their imprisonment, demanding the release of the American prisoners who are being used as pawns in the Kremlin's political game. It is past time for Russia to release these political prisoners and return them to their families.

Again, I thank Mr. PFLUGER for introducing this legislation, and I thank Ranking Member MCCAUL for working with us. I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, 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. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 186.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. 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.

#### HAITI DEVELOPMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND INSTITUTIONAL TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE ACT

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2471) to measure the progress of post-disaster recovery and efforts to address corruption, governance, rule of law, and media freedoms in Haiti, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2471

*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 “Haiti Development, Accountability, and Institutional Transparency Initiative Act”.

**SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

Congress finds the following:

(1) On January 12, 2010, a massive earthquake struck near the Haitian capital city of Port-au-Prince, leaving at least 220,000 people dead, including 103 United States citizens, 101 United Nations personnel, and nearly 18 percent of Haiti’s civil service, as well as 300,000 injured, 115,000 homes destroyed, and 1,500,000 Haitians displaced.

(2) The international community, led by the United States and the United Nations, mounted an unprecedented humanitarian response to the earthquake in Haiti. Through 2018, more than 8,000,000,000 has been disbursed by donors. Since the 2010 earthquake, the United States Government has disbursed more than 4,000,000,000 in recovery and development funding.

(3) On October 4, 2016, Hurricane Matthew struck southwestern Haiti on the Tiburon Peninsula, causing widespread damage and flooding and leaving 1.4 million people in need of immediate assistance. Recovery efforts continue more than four years later.

(4) Prior to both the 2010 earthquake and 2016 hurricane, Haiti registered among the lowest in socioeconomic indicators and had the second highest rate of income disparity in the world—conditions that have further complicated disaster recovery and resilience efforts. As of November 2020, 4,400,000 people were in need of humanitarian assistance in Haiti.

(5) Since 2018, tens of thousands of Haitians have participated in popular demonstrations demanding accountability over government management of Petrocaribe resources. In early 2019, the Haitian superior court of auditors released a series of reports implicating high-level government officials in the misappropriation of funds.

(6) The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner and the Human Rights Service jointly found a 333 percent increase in human rights violations and abuses against the rights of life and security in Haiti from July 2018 through December 2019. There were 131 violations in 2018 and 567 violations in 2019, including the shooting of at least five Haitian journalists covering the protests.

(7) Leading members of civil society have faced attacks, including Monferrier Dorval, a constitutional law expert and president of the Port-au-Prince bar who was killed on August 28, 2020.

(8) On November 13, 2018, according to the Haitian National Human Rights Defense Network, at least 71 people were killed and 18 people were raped in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of La Saline.

(9) On December 10, 2020, the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control designated former Haitian National Police officer Jimmy Cherizier, former Director General of the Ministry of the Interior Fednel Monchery, and former Departmental Delegate Joseph Pierre Richard Duplan pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Executive Order for being foreign persons responsible for or complicit in, or having directly or indirectly engaged in, serious human rights abuse for their connection to the La Saline massacre.

(10) Following the La Saline massacre, similar attacks have occurred in Port-au-Prince neighborhoods, including the November 2019 and August 2020 attacks on Bel Air,

in which 24 people were killed and hundreds of families were displaced.

(11) Parliamentary elections scheduled for October 2019 did not take place, and since January 13, 2020, President Jovenel Moïse has ruled by decree. The United States and international community have urged President Moïse to limit the use of executive decrees during this period and have expressed concern over several decrees issued, including those creating the National Intelligence Agency and appointing three new judges to the Supreme Court outside of constitutional procedures. Haitian civil society organizations have denounced the president’s use of decrees as an attempt to consolidate power.

(12) Due to institutional weakness and other challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Haiti’s economy contracted by an estimated 4 percent in 2020 and inflation neared 20 percent. Although there has been no parliament in place since January 2020, the Haitian Government approved a budget on September 30, 2020. However, the delay prevented the International Monetary Fund and other multilaterals from disbursing millions in international assistance.

(13) In September 2020, President Moïse bypassed the Supreme Court to appoint a Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) by executive decree. Several civil society groups that traditionally participate in Haiti’s electoral councils criticized the decision and have declined to be represented in the CEP.

(14) The Moïse administration lacks the credibility to oversee a proposed constitutional referendum scheduled for June 2021, which legal experts consider unconstitutional.

(15) There are concerns that, given the lack of democratic checks and balances, the dispute over the credibility of the electoral council, and the deteriorating security situation, elections scheduled for September 2021 will not be free or fair. Additionally, the security situation remains volatile and on February 7, 2021, President Moïse alleged that a coup had been attempted against him leading to 23 arrests and the forced retirement of three Supreme Court judges.

**SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

It is the policy of the United States to support the sustainable rebuilding and development of Haiti in a manner that—

(1) recognizes Haitian independence, self-reliance, sovereignty, democratic governance, and efficiency;

(2) promotes efforts that are led by and support the people and Government of Haiti at all levels so that Haitians lead the course of reconstruction and development of Haiti;

(3) builds the long-term capacity of the Government of Haiti, civil society in Haiti, and the private sector to foster economic opportunities in Haiti;

(4) fosters collaboration between the Haitian diaspora in the United States, including dual citizens of Haiti and the United States, with the Haitian Government and the business community in Haiti;

(5) supports anti-corruption efforts, promotes press freedom, and addresses human rights concerns, including through the enforcement of sanctions imposed in accordance with the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act on individuals implicated in human rights violations;

(6) respects and helps restore Haiti’s natural resources, as well as strengthens community-level resilience to environmental and weather-related impacts;

(7) promotes the holding of free, fair, and timely elections in accordance with democratic principles and the Haitian Constitution;

(8) provides timely and comprehensive reporting on Haiti and the United States Gov-

ernment’s goals and progress, as well as transparent post program evaluations and contracting data;

(9) promotes the participation of Haitian women and youth in governmental and nongovernmental institutions and in economic development and governance assistance programs funded by the United States; and

(10) does not provide support to facilitate the proposed June 2021 constitutional referendum, including through multilateral organizations.

**SEC. 4. STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS AND ANTICORRUPTION EFFORTS IN HAITI AND HOLDING PERPETRATORS OF THE LA SALINE MASSACRE ACCOUNTABLE.**

(a) SECRETARY OF STATE PRIORITIZATION.—The Secretary of State shall prioritize the protection of human rights and anticorruption efforts in Haiti by the following methods:

(1) Fostering strong relationships with independent civil society groups focused on monitoring corruption and human rights abuses and promoting democracy in Haiti.

(2) Supporting the efforts of the Haitian Government to identify persons involved in human rights violations and significant acts of corruption in Haiti, including public and private sector actors, and hold them accountable for their actions.

(3) Addressing concerns of impunity for the alleged perpetrators, as well as the intellectual authors, of the La Saline massacre.

(4) Urging authorities to continue to investigate attacks in the La Saline and Bel Air neighborhoods from 2018 through 2021 that left dozens dead in order to bring the perpetrators to justice.

(b) BRIEFING.—

(1) ELEMENTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on the happenings on November 13, 2018, in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of La Saline, and its aftermath. The briefing shall include—

(A) an examination of any links between the massacre in La Saline and mass protests that occurred concurrently in the country;

(B) an analysis of the reports on the La Saline massacre authored by the United Nations, the European Union, and the Government of Haiti;

(C) a detailed description of all known perpetrators, as well as the intellectual authors, of the shootings;

(D) an overview of efforts taken by the Haitian Government to bring the perpetrators, as well as the intellectual authors, of the La Saline massacre to justice and to prevent other similar attacks; and

(E) an assessment of the ensuing treatment and displacement of the survivors of the La Saline massacre.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In the briefing required under paragraph (1), the Secretary of State shall consult with nongovernmental organizations in Haiti and the United States.

**SEC. 5. ACTIONS TO PROMOTE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND ASSEMBLY IN HAITI.**

The Secretary of State shall prioritize the promotion of freedom of the press and freedom of assembly, as well as the protection of journalists in Haiti by the following methods:

(1) Advocating to Haitian authorities for increased protection for journalists and the press and for the freedom to peacefully assemble or protest in Haiti.

(2) Collaborating with government officials and representatives of civil society to develop and implement legal protections for journalists in Haiti.

(3) Supporting efforts to strengthen transparency in Haiti’s public and private sectors, as well as access to information in Haiti.

(4) Supporting efforts to strengthen the capacity of independent journalists and increase access to resources for investigative journalism.

**SEC. 6. ACTIONS TO SUPPORT POST-EARTHQUAKE, POST-HURRICANE AND POST-COVID-19 RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT IN HAITI.**

The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), shall prioritize post-earthquake and post-hurricane recovery and development efforts in Haiti by the following methods:

(1) Collaborating with the Haitian Government on a detailed and transparent development plan that includes clear objectives and benchmarks.

(2) Building the capacity of Haitian-led public, private, and nongovernmental sector institutions in Haiti through post-earthquake and post-hurricane recovery and development planning.

(3) Assessing the impact of both the United States' and the international community's recovery and development efforts in Haiti since January 2010.

(4) Supporting disaster resilience and reconstruction efforts.

(5) Addressing the underlying causes of poverty and inequality, and improving access to health resources, clean water, food, and shelter.

(6) Assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on post-disaster recovery efforts and evaluating United States support to help with pandemic response efforts in Haiti, including providing technical assistance and preventing other infectious disease outbreaks.

**SEC. 7. REPORT.**

(a) **REPORT CONTENT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and other relevant agencies and departments, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that includes—

(1) a strategy for carrying out the initiatives described in sections 4, 5, and 6, including established baselines, benchmarks, and indicators to measure outcomes and impact;

(2) an assessment of major corruption committed among the public and private sectors, and, as practical and appropriate, an assessment of corruption prosecutions investigated by the Haitian judiciary since January 2015;

(3) an overview of efforts taken by the Haitian Government to address corruption, including the Petrocaribe scandal, and corrective measures to strengthen and restore trust in Haiti's public institutions;

(4) a description of United States Government efforts to consult and engage with Haitian Government officials and independent civil society groups focused on monitoring corruption and human rights abuses and promoting democracy and press freedom in Haiti since January 2015;

(5) a description of the Haitian Government's response to civic protests that have taken place since July 2018 and any allegations of human rights abuses, including attacks on journalists;

(6) an assessment of United States security assistance to Haiti, including the United States support to the Haitian National Police and an assessment of compliance with section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2378d) and section 362 of title 10, United States Code (commonly referred to as the "Leahy Laws");

(7) a description of the Haitian Government's efforts to support displaced survivors of urban and gang violence;

(8) an assessment of the impact of presidential decrees on the health of Haiti's

democratic institutions and safeguarding of human rights, including reducing the authority of the Superior Court of Accounts and Administrative Litigation, promulgating an antiterrorism law, and establishing the National Intelligence Agency, as well as retiring and subsequently appointing judges to the Supreme Court of Haiti;

(9) a plan in collaboration with the Haitian Government on efforts to support development goals since January 2015, including steps taken to—

(A) strengthen institutions at the national and local levels; and

(B) strengthen democratic governance at the national and local levels;

(10) an analysis of the effectiveness and sustainability of United States-financed development projects, including the Caracol Industrial Park and supporting infrastructure;

(11) a breakdown of procurement from Haitian small- and medium-sized businesses and nongovernmental organizations by the United States and Haitian governments for development and humanitarian activities by year since 2015, and a description of efforts to increase local procurement, including food aid;

(12) a description of United States efforts taken since January 2010 to assist the Haitian people in their pursuits for free, fair, and timely democratic elections;

(13) quantitative and qualitative indicators to assess progress and benchmarks for United States initiatives focused on sustainable development in Haiti, including democracy assistance, economic revitalization, natural disaster recovery, pandemic response, resilience, energy and infrastructure, health, and food security; and

(14) a risk assessment of conflict, instability, and violence in Haiti that includes information relating to—

(A) systemic patterns and causes of violence and subsequent impunity relating to massacres, death threats, kidnappings, armed attacks, and firearm-related violence, with analysis of the roles of the various actors and beneficiaries who play a part, including Haitian Government actors;

(B) gang activity and its role in the recent wave of kidnappings and the capacities of the police force to address the most serious manifestations of insecurity;

(C) the scope and role of criminal activity and its linkages to political forces, particularly leading up to elections; and

(D) implications of the lack of independence of Haiti's judicial system.

(b) **CONSULTATION.**—In preparing the report required under subsection (a), the Secretary of State and the USAID Administrator shall consult with nongovernmental organizations and civil society groups in Haiti and the United States, as well as the Government of Haiti where appropriate.

(c) **PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.**—The report required under subsection (a) shall be made publicly available on the website of the Department of State.

**SEC. 8. SUNSET.**

(a) **REPEAL.**—The Assessing Progress in Haiti Act (22 U.S.C. 2151n; Public Law 113-162) is repealed.

(b) **TERMINATION.**—This Act shall terminate on December 31, 2025.

**SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.**

In this Act the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

New York (Mr. MEEKS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PFLUGER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2471, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2471, the Haiti Development, Accountability, and Institutional Transparency Initiative Act.

I thank my friend, Mr. JEFFRIES, for authoring this bipartisan bill. Mr. JEFFRIES has been a strong advocate for the Haitian people, and I thank him for his friendship and leadership on this very important issue.

On January 12, 2010, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti with an epicenter just a few miles west of Port-au-Prince. This devastating natural disaster killed more than 200,000 people, displaced 1.5 million Haitians, and caused billions of dollars in damages.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today with the same message my colleagues and I delivered to the Haitian people 11 years ago: The United States remains steadfast in our commitment to help Haiti however we can.

Over the last decade, Congress has worked closely with the Haitian-American diaspora, the Haitian people, the Haitian Government to support rebuilding and development efforts on the island.

Unfortunately, after Hurricane Matthew devastated Haiti in 2016, the country faced another humanitarian crisis, and additional rebuilding and development plans were needed.

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Sadly, Haiti still has a long way to go. The Haiti Development, Accountability, and Institutional Transparency Initiative Act evaluates the effectiveness of U.S. recovery and development efforts in Haiti over the past 10 years and devises strategies to promote the rule of law, encourage freedom of the press, combat government corruption, address the root causes of poverty, and improve development efforts.

Helping to pave the pathway to a reconstructed, prosperous Haiti, of course, is a two-way street. We must learn from our mistakes over the past 10 years and devise innovative solutions for any roadblocks that lie ahead.

At the same time, it is imperative that the Haitian Government address the growing and legitimate concerns about the country's deteriorating human rights situation, spiraling gang violence, and often-seen impunity for corrupt officials.

It is the duty of all of us here in Congress to stand with the Haitian people as they demand a safe, prosperous, and democratic Haiti. I urge the Haitian Government to do all they can to engage with their citizens and truly listen to their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed this bipartisan bill unanimously, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting its passage on the House floor today.

Again, I thank my real friend, Mr. JEFFRIES, for being such a great champion for Haiti. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people of Haiti continue to suffer from devastating natural disasters, political instability, and fragile public institutions. The country has never recovered from the 2010 earthquake or the damage caused by Hurricane Matthew in 2016.

With their economy unable to recover, Haiti remains the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. As a result, the lack of economic opportunity has led to an increase in crime and gang violence. At the same time, civil unrest caused by political instability plagues the island nation.

There are credible accusations of systemic government corruption and human rights abuses, and Haiti is facing a constitutional crisis after failing to organize legislative elections in 2019; meaning, the country has no sitting Parliament at this time.

We continue to strongly urge the Government of Haiti to hold free and fair elections that reflect the will of the Haitian people.

All of these challenges are now compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why I support the Haiti Development, Accountability, and Institutional Transparency Initiative Act. This legislation requires the State Department to assess how effective U.S. assistance is in helping Haiti's recovery efforts.

Haiti remains the second largest recipient of U.S. support in the region. Since 2011, American taxpayers have sent nearly \$1.9 billion to assist them with economic development and to support expanding their democracy. It is our responsibility in this Congress to ensure that this money is, in fact, being spent wisely.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. JACOBS), a valued member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ms. JACOBS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 2471, the Haiti Development, Accountability, and Institutional Transparency Initiative Act. I thank Congressman JEFFRIES for his

leadership in offering this important piece of legislation that will ensure that we take stock of U.S. policy in Haiti and measure our progress in addressing corruption, improving governance, and advancing the rule of law.

Haiti is facing one of its worst outbreaks of violence since 1986. This has had a devastating impact on the Haitian people and threatened any long-term progress we have made. We have seen this movie before. Instead of continuing the same approach and hoping for a different outcome, it is critical that as we are conducting our long-overdue review of policy, we are analyzing the drivers and risks of conflict, instability, and violence in Haiti.

This bill sets out to do just that and more. The amendment I offered in committee requires the State Department and USAID to conduct an assessment of conflict, instability, and violence in Haiti, analyzing the systemic patterns and causes of violence and the role of actors and beneficiaries who play a part.

This bill also makes sure that State and USAID are consulting with NGOs and civil society groups in Haiti, a critical step that is often overlooked.

As someone who has worked in conflict stabilization at the State Department, I know how important it is that we understand the root causes of violence in order to craft sound policy and make decisions on where to focus our foreign assistance. This bill would ensure our review of U.S. policy in Haiti takes this important step.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, it is true that Haiti continues to face significant challenges. Yet, I remain optimistic that we can partner with the Haitian people and play a constructive role in the coming critical years of Haiti's recovery. And while we must continue our unwavering support for Haiti, we also must be open to making adjustments moving forward.

By increasing cooperation and being open to new ideas, I am confident that we can support the Haitian people as they seek peace, stability, an end to poverty, and a fully functioning democracy.

We know this is not going to be easy, but we have to stand by the Haitian people and make sure that they have an opportunity to have a better tomorrow, for surely, they deserve it.

Mr. Speaker, let me finally thank, again, Representative JEFFRIES for authoring this piece of legislation. It is very important, and I know that he has a large portion of the Haitian diaspora in his district, as it is in New York in mine and Representative CLARKE's and, of course, in Florida.

We will stand by the Haitian people, not giving up hope, not giving up trust, imploring the Government of Haiti to

do the right thing for the people of Haiti by having elections that are free and fair.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my support for H.R. 2471, the "Haiti Development, Accountability, and Institutional Transparency Initiative Act," which modernizes the U.S. foreign assistance strategy to Haiti, and affirms our role as a champion of democracy and good neighbor in the Western Hemisphere.

This legislation, introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from New York, Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES, would promote transparency within Haitian humanitarian assistance programs, and place democratic values such as good governance, freedom of the press, and human rights at the forefront of our bilateral relationship with Haiti.

Since the catastrophic earthquake on January 12, 2010, which left 220,000 people dead, 300,000 injured, and 115,000 homes destroyed, the United States—in partnership with the international community—mounted an unprecedented humanitarian response.

The United States Government has disbursed more than \$4,000,000,000 in recovery and development funding since the disaster struck in 2010.

In 2016, Hurricane Matthew caused widespread damage and flooding, leaving 1.4 million people in need of immediate assistance.

Prior to these catastrophes, Haiti registered among the lowest in socioeconomic indicators and had the second highest rate of income disparity in the world.

Concurrently, democratic backsliding in Haiti undercuts the shared commitment to democracy in our bilateral relationship and stymies our effort to ensure that humanitarian aid is reaching and improving the welfare of the Haitian people.

The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner and the Human Rights Service jointly found a 333 percent increase in human rights violations and abuses from July 2018 through December 2019.

On top of that, parliamentary elections scheduled for October 2019 never took place, and since January 2020, President Jovenel Moïse has ruled by decree.

As an original co-sponsor of H.R. 3059, the "Assessing Progress in Haiti, Act of 2013," I maintain an unshaking belief in the Haitian people's resilience, entrepreneurial spirit, and desire for a free and fair political system.

That is why I also staunchly opposed the former president's attempt to terminate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians living in the United States.

In tandem with the U.S. Government, Haiti relies on remittances that its citizens receive from TPS beneficiaries in the United States.

The Haitian community in Texas exemplifies this reality.

As such, I am pleased that Secretary Mayorkas announced a new 18-month designation of Haiti for Temporary Protected Status.

Following Hurricane Matthew, I called upon Houstonians to do their part in alleviating the suffering of our neighbors in Haiti.

In partnership with local organizations, churches, and the diaspora community, we collected and donated clothing, pillows, non-perishable foods, and other items to help the Haitian people.

Now, I call upon this Congress to answer the call of help—to act in accordance with our long-standing record of supporting the Haitian people in recovering and building a future worthy of their aspirations.

The “Haiti Development, Accountability, and Institutional Transparency Initiative Act” is our response to this call for help.

H.R. 2471—a bicameral and bipartisan effort—urgently upgrades our U.S. foreign assistance strategy and strengthens human rights, promotes freedom of the press, and supports disaster resilience and reconstruction efforts in Haiti.

I commend my colleagues, particularly the gentleman from New York, Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES, for shining a light on this issue, and remaining firm in our commitment to the Haitian people.

Let us, with one voice, irrespective of party, come together and affirm our role as a bulwark of democracy in the world and good neighbor in the hemisphere.

I urge all Members to join me in voting for this long overdue but enormously beneficial legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2471, 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.

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Mr. 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.

#### GLOBAL LEARNING LOSS ASSESSMENT ACT OF 2021

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1500) to direct the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to submit to Congress a report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global basic education programs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1500

*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 Learning Loss Assessment Act of 2021”.

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Before the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (commonly referred to as “COVID-19”) pandemic began, 258,000,000 children were out of school globally, including 130,000,000 girls.

(2) Students already at a disadvantage before COVID-19 will experience greater learning loss, thereby worsening inequity and inequality.

(3) Approximately 90 percent of the world’s student population—over 1,600,000,000 children and youth—have had their education disrupted by school closure due to COVID-19.

(4) School closures lead to interrupted learning, poor nutrition, gaps in childcare, increased dropout rates, exposure to violence, and social isolation.

(5) Up to 24,000,000 children are at risk of dropping out of school permanently due to rising levels of child poverty associated with the pandemic.

(6) School closure and remote learning is especially burdensome on girls, who are frequently expected to shoulder more household chores and responsibilities and are more vulnerable to gender-based violence.

(7) During the Ebola epidemic, nationwide school closures in Sierra Leone in 2014 led to increased instances of sexual- and gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, school dropout, and child labor for girls.

(8) More than 60 percent of national distance learning alternatives rely exclusively on online platforms but two-thirds of the world’s school aged children, or 1,300,000,000 children aged 3 through 17, do not have internet connection in their homes, and schools and local learning centers also frequently have inadequate internet connectivity. Eighty percent of students in sub-Saharan Africa lack such access, with an even higher rate for girls.

(9) Children and youth with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to the health, education, and socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic. As a further challenge, distance learning tools are not always accessible to learners with disabilities or those with complex learning needs, especially in poorer and rural households.

(10) Before the COVID-19 pandemic, refugee children were twice as likely to be out of school as other youth, and school closures and a lack of access to distance learning tools threaten to make the education gap among refugee children even more severe.

(11) The economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to an education financing gap of \$77,000,000,000 in low- and middle-income countries over the next 2 years.

(12) The economic cost of school closures could be up to \$1,337 per student, which on a global scale equates to approximately \$10,000,000,000,000 in lost economic output over the coming generation.

#### SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States that United States-funded basic education programs operating in low- and middle-income countries should seek to—

(1) provide inclusive learning opportunities for students and teachers, especially for the most marginalized, including girls, children with disabilities, and previously out of school children;

(2) build local capacity and help countries strengthen their education systems, including opportunities for early childhood development;

(3) improve the availability, delivery, and quality of education services from early childhood through secondary education;

(4) improve equity and safety in education services; and

(5) support the return of children to school who have experienced interruptions in their education due to the COVID-19 pandemic and work to enroll previously out-of-school children and youth, particularly the most marginalized.

#### SEC. 4. REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, acting through the Senior Coordinator for International Basic Education Assistance and in consultation with the Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s Em-

powerment, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on United States Agency for International Development basic education programs.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:

(1) An assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on such basic education programs, including the magnitude of learning loss that will result from protracted school closures and the specific effects of school and learning space closures on marginalized children and youth, including girls, minority populations, displaced children, and those with disabilities.

(2) An assessment comparing academic outcomes of beneficiaries of United States Agency for International Development basic education programs, as practical and appropriate, between those that attend schools that remain closed or continue to operate remotely since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and schools that have resumed in-person instruction.

(3) A description of the effectiveness, cost, accessibility, and reach of the most commonly used forms of distance learning in low- and middle-income countries and low-resource contexts.

(4) A description of efforts to pivot and adapt such basic education programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, including an overview of existing data on funding and programmatic focus disaggregated by gender, country, education level, and disability.

(5) An identification and description of any gaps in, or barriers to, reaching and educating marginalized populations, such as girls, children with disabilities, displaced children, or other children adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with distance learning interventions.

(6) A description of the United States Agency for International Development’s plan and needed authorities and resources to prevent degradation of such basic education programs and to support, as necessary and appropriate, continued distance learning interventions, safe school reopenings, assessments of student learning levels, remedial and accelerated learning, re-enrollment campaigns for out-of-school children and youth, and education system strengthening and resilience-building efforts.

(7) An analysis of the coordination between the United States Agency for International Development and other actors in global basic education policy and programming to provide education during the COVID-19 pandemic, including partner organizations, faith based-organizations, donors, and multilateral organizations.

(8) A description of opportunities to partner and support efforts to expand access to digital infrastructure, internet connectivity, and learning resources in areas that lack access to digital and remote learning infrastructure and resources, including rural and remote communities.

(c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be made available to the public.

(d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from