

she worked tirelessly to better the lives of others. In doing so, she showed the world there were no boundaries. That is how the center looks at its work and those who it serves.

As a parent of a child with a disability, this issue is very near and dear to my heart, so I am glad to have this time today to share my thoughts and experiences. I know firsthand the importance of each child with a disability having every possible opportunity to succeed and thrive. Any parent of a child with any disability can tell you that their top priority is to provide the very best for their children's education and growth.

I will work tirelessly in and out of Congress for the disability community. This is one of many reasons why I support this bill. Today's bipartisan legislation will allow the center to continue its invaluable research and developmental programs in several areas, including communication techniques and teaching methods.

All of this leads to improved program offerings and, ultimately, better lives for deaf-blind Americans and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 1433.

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

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will help members of the deaf-blind community across the country. I thank the gentleman from New York for his leadership, along with the sponsors and cosponsors of the legislation. I am proud that the House is considering this legislation today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1433, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

BRIDGING THE GAP FOR NEW AMERICANS ACT

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3157) to require the Secretary of Labor to conduct a study of the factors affecting employment opportunities for immigrants and refugees with professional credentials obtained in foreign countries.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3157

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 "Bridging the Gap for New Americans Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **APPLICABLE IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES.**—The term "applicable immigrants and refugees"—

(A) means individuals who—

(i)(I) are not citizens or nationals of the United States; and

(II) are lawfully present in the United States and authorized to be employed in the United States; or

(ii) are naturalized citizens of the United States who were born outside of the United States and its outlying possessions; and

(B) includes individuals described in section 602(b)(2) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009 (title VI of division F of Public Law 111-8; 8 U.S.C. 1101 note).

(2) **OTHER TERMS.**—Except as otherwise defined in this section, terms used in this Act have the definitions given such terms under section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)).

SEC. 3. STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES WITH PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS OBTAINED IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

(a) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Labor, in coordination with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Administrator of the Internal Revenue Service, and the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, shall conduct a study of the factors affecting employment opportunities in the United States for applicable immigrants and refugees who have professional credentials that were obtained in a country other than the United States.

(2) **WORK WITH OTHER ENTITIES.**—The Secretary of Labor shall seek to work with relevant nonprofit organizations and State agencies to use the existing data and resources of such entities to conduct the study required under paragraph (1).

(3) **LIMITATIONS ON DISCLOSURE.**—Any information provided to the Secretary of Labor in connection with the study required under paragraph (1)—

(A) may only be used for the purposes of, and to the extent necessary to ensure the efficient operation of, such study; and

(B) may not be disclosed to any other person or entity except as provided under this subsection.

(b) **INCLUSIONS.**—The study required under subsection (a)(1) shall include—

(1) an analysis of the employment history of applicable immigrants and refugees admitted to the United States during the 5-year period immediately preceding the date of the enactment of this Act, which shall include, to the extent practicable—

(A) a comparison of the employment applicable immigrants and refugees held before immigrating to the United States with the employment they obtained in the United States, if any, since their arrival; and

(B) the occupational and professional credentials and academic degrees held by applicable immigrants and refugees before immigrating to the United States;

(2) an assessment of any barriers that prevent applicable immigrants and refugees from using occupational experience obtained outside the United States to obtain employment in the United States;

(3) an analysis of available public and private resources assisting applicable immigrants and refugees who have professional experience and qualifications obtained outside of the United States to obtain skill-appropriate employment in the United States; and

(4) policy recommendations for better enabling applicable immigrants and refugees who have professional experience and qualifications obtained outside of the United States to obtain skill-appropriate employment in the United States.

(c) **REPORT.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor shall—

(1) submit a report to Congress that describes the results of the study conducted pursuant to subsection (a); and

(2) make such report publicly available on the website of the Department of Labor.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 3157, the Bridging the Gap for New Americans Act.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, each year, millions of immigrants and refugees come to the United States to find a better life and achieve the American Dream. Many of these new Americans arrive with valuable experiences in specialized fields and international degrees that could help strengthen our communities and our economy.

Regrettably, we know that these Americans face barriers that prevent them from utilizing their skills and credentials to contribute to our country and pursue their careers. In fact, nearly 2 million highly skilled immigrants are underemployed or working in low-skilled jobs instead of their expert fields.

These barriers directly affect our economy, costing tens of billions of dollars in forgone wages and billions in lost Federal, State, and local tax payments each year.

In response, the Bridging the Gap for New Americans Act will help us better understand not only the employment barriers facing immigrants and refugees but also steps we can take to ensure that new Americans can join our economic growth and pursue careers in which they can succeed to their fullest potential.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a "yes" vote on this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Bridging the Gap for New Americans Act. I applaud our colleagues in the Senate for approving this bill this summer by unanimous consent. I also acknowledge our colleague, Mr. JOHN KATKO, for his work on a companion bill in the House.

S. 3157 directs the Secretary of Labor to conduct a study on barriers to employment for legal immigrants and refugees who earn their professional credentials somewhere other than the United States. The study will also include policy recommendations for better helping these immigrants and refugees obtain skill-appropriate employment in the United States.

Obstacles for foreign-educated immigrants and refugees who are legally in the United States but are unemployed or underemployed include language barriers, credential recognition difficulties, regulatory hurdles, and a lack of professional networks to offer assistance.

This underutilization of skills, or brain waste, is costing the United States billions of dollars per year in lost individual earnings, economic output, and tax revenue.

The healthcare sector is especially impacted by this challenge. Two million immigrants with college degrees in the United States have been relegated to low-wage jobs or unable to find work, often because of licensing, credential recognition, and other barriers. This leaves immigrants and refugees unable to contribute fully to the economy, reach their full potential, or secure the American Dream.

In addition to providing recommendations for addressing these challenges for individual immigrants and their families, S. 3157 will benefit all Americans and our economy. With too many jobs still going unfilled and a rapidly evolving labor market, it is vital we address this issue now.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 3157, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. CROW), the chair of the Subcommittee on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development of the Small Business Committee.

Mr. CROW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 3157, a bill to help eliminate barriers to employment facing immigrants and refugees across the country.

I represent one of the most diverse districts in Colorado, and we know in Colorado and in my community that diversity is our strength.

Many of our immigrant refugee neighbors have skills and professional credentials they can't use because of regulatory hurdles. These hurdles, whether language barriers, difficulty in recognizing credentials, or a lack of

professional networks, prevent many from making a good living for their families or contributing fully to our economy in reaching their full potential.

The unemployment and underemployment of these folks is a missed opportunity for our businesses, for our community, and for our country.

In 2016, across the U.S., nearly 2 million immigrants with college degrees were unable to find work or were employed in low-wage jobs. This includes more than one-third of the 11,000 immigrants in the State of Colorado with health-related undergraduate degrees in 2020.

Identifying these barriers to full employment for these immigrants and refugees is an essential first step to overcoming them. This bill would direct the Department of Labor to conduct a collaborative interagency study of the barriers that hold back refugees and immigrants from their full potential.

I thank Senator KLOBUCHAR and Congressman KATKO for their diligence in this effort, and I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting passage of this bill today.

Mr. SEMPOLINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO), my friend.

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Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 3157, the Bridging the Gap for New Americans Act. This legislation's journey to the House floor began in my office 3 years ago and was born out of a conversation with Interfaith Works of Central New York, a non-profit in my district.

Interfaith Works serves the Central New York community by working to resettle individuals and families that have fled unimaginable hardship, seeking opportunity and prosperity legally, legally, in the United States.

As advocates from the organization with firsthand experience described, Interfaith's resettlement efforts consistently encounter a troubling trend; underemployment or unemployment among individuals that come to America with professional degrees and certifications from other countries.

This phenomenon, often referred to as "brain waste," impacts individuals with skills and experiences in a wide range of in-demand fields, and it is by no means isolated to Central New York.

A study by the Migration Policy Institute estimated that 2 million immigrants and refugees with college degrees have been relegated to low-wage jobs or left unemployed in the U.S., with 60 percent of these individuals holding credentials in the healthcare sector.

On an annual basis, this untapped talent is estimated to cost nearly \$40 billion in uncollected wages and over \$10 billion in unrealized tax receipts.

Simply put, these are individuals who came to our country through the

proper channels—and I can't stress that enough—who want to contribute to our economy, and who are now facing significant obstacles in seeking employment through no fault of their own.

Most concerning, the underutilization of their skills comes in the midst of a nationwide workforce crisis, when our economy needs their contributions more than nearly any point in my lifetime.

So, what is Congress going to do about it?

I am proud to say that the Bridging the Gap for New Americans Act takes a significant first step in addressing brain waste and enabling millions of individuals who are already legally present in the United States to participate fully in our economy.

This bill would seek to identify the underlying factors that contribute to brain waste by directing the Department of Labor to study existing barriers and issue recommendations to help combat them.

Critically, the narrowly tailored consensus approach taken by this legislation has already received strong bipartisan support, with the legislation passing in the Senate by unanimous consent earlier this year.

The Bridging the Gap for New Americans Act also has significant support nationwide and has been endorsed by over 200 workforce development groups and community organizations.

I thank Representatives CROW, FITZPATRICK, and GOTTHEIMER for joining me in introducing the House version of this bill in a bipartisan manner, as well as Senators KLOBUCHAR and CORNYN for their work to move this legislation through the Senate.

I also thank the hundreds of national advocates who have worked tirelessly to raise awareness surrounding this brain waste and to build support for this commonsense legislation.

This bill is about upholding the American Dream and unlocking opportunities for millions of workers, and I urge all my colleagues to join me in voting to send it to the President's desk.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SEMPOLINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Bridging the Gap for New Americans Act. This bill will help us understand how to give legal immigrants with professional credentials more access to opportunities in our country.

Immigrants and refugees who spent years earning college degrees and professional credentials should not be relegated to low-wage jobs because they were educated outside of the United States.

Those pursuing a better life and respecting our laws should be commended, not punished. S. 3157 will shed light on the bureaucratic hurdles and

unnecessary red tape these workers face and how we might remove these obstacles.

It would be foolish of us to let good talent go to waste, especially as our country continues to face a labor shortage, particularly in the healthcare sector.

This legislation is common sense. It will help immigrants and refugees who are in our country legally fulfill their potential, better provide for their families, and become even more of an asset to our economy. I urge a "yes" vote on this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues have pointed out, the Bridging the Gap for New Americans Act is particularly critical as we continue to recover from the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, more than ever, we must draw from the skills of our Nation's immigrants and refugees to accelerate our recovery and strengthen our communities.

In other words, this bill will ensure that the new Americans can re-establish their careers, succeed to their full potential, and join the effort to build back a brighter future for all Americans.

I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SEMPOLINSKI), the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO), the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. CROW), the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK), and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER), as well as Senator KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota, Senator CORNYN of Texas, Senator COONS of Delaware, and Senator MURKOWSKI from Alaska, for their leadership on this legislative priority.

I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and 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. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3157.

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. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NO TRAFFICKING ZONES ACT

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7566) to amend title 18, United States Code, to increase the punishment for human trafficking in a school zone, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7566

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 "No Trafficking Zones Act" or the "NTZ Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds as follows:

(1) Child sex trafficking can have devastating immediate and long-term consequences, including health impacts, psychological and physical trauma, and even death.

(2) While any child can be targeted by a trafficker, research, data, survivors' lived experiences, and expertise have revealed that traffickers often target vulnerable youth who lack strong support networks, supervision, care, or basic necessities, have low self-esteem, have experienced violence in the past, are experiencing homelessness, are experiencing academic difficulties, or are marginalized by society, and lure them into forced labor and prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation. Traffickers are masters of manipulation and prey upon vulnerabilities using psychological pressure, intimidation, and drugs to control and sexually exploit the child for their benefit.

(3) The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) has received reports of child sex trafficking in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. These reports include incidents occurring in every type of community, including suburban, rural, urban, and Tribal lands. In 2021, NCMEC received more than 17,200 reports of possible child sex trafficking.

(4) Of 22,326 trafficking victims and survivors identified through contacts with the National Human Trafficking Hotline in 2019, at least 5,359 were under age 18.

(5) Many underage victims of sex trafficking are students in the United States school system. No community, school, socioeconomic group, or student demographic is immune.

(6) While the internet and social media make up the majority of first encounters, traffickers regularly find young people in shopping malls, through friends, at bus stops, and at schools. Specifically, traffickers systematically target vulnerable children and youth by frequenting locations where young people congregate, including schools. They also use peers or classmates, who befriend the target and slowly groom them for the trafficker by bringing the young person along to parties and other activities.

(7) A 2018 survey reported that 55 percent of young sex trafficking survivors in Texas were trafficked while at school or school activities and 60 percent of trafficked adults say they were first groomed and solicited for trafficking on school campuses.

(8) Schools can and should be safe havens for students. Schools are best positioned to identify and report suspected trafficking and connect affected students to critical services. Students are more likely to report instances of sex trafficking, attempted sex trafficking, or grooming for the purposes of sex trafficking where they feel most safe from harm and threats.

SEC. 3. INCREASED PUNISHMENT FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SCHOOL ZONES.

Section 1591 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

"(e)(1) Whoever violates subsection (a) in a school zone, or on, or within 1,000 feet of, a premises on which a school-sponsored activity is taking place, or on, or within 1,000 feet of a premises owned by an institution of higher education, shall, in addition to the punishment otherwise provided under this section, be imprisoned for not more than 5 years.

"(2) In this subsection:

"(A) The term 'school zone' has the meaning given such term in section 921.

"(B) The term 'school-sponsored activity' means any activity that is produced, financed, arranged, supervised, or coordinated by a school or a State educational agency or local educational agency or is under the jurisdiction of a State educational agency or local educational agency.

"(C) The terms 'State educational agency' and 'local educational agency' have the meanings given those terms under section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

"(D) 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)."

SEC. 4. INCREASED PUNISHMENT FOR COERCION AND ENTICEMENT IN SCHOOL ZONES.

Section 2422 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by striking "individual who has not attained the age of 18 years" and inserting "minor"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(c)(1) Whoever violates subsection (a) or (b) knowing, or having reasonable cause to believe, that the violation is committed against a minor who is enrolled in school and is, at the time of the violation, in a school zone or on, or within 1,000 feet of, a premises on which a school-sponsored activity is taking place, or against a person who is enrolled in an institution of higher education and is, at the time of the violation on or within 1,000 feet of a premises owned by the institution of higher education, shall, in addition to the punishment otherwise provided under this section, be imprisoned for not more than 5 years.

"(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply in a case in which a minor's presence on, or within 1,000 feet of, the premises on which a school-sponsored activity is taking place is not related to such school-sponsored activity, or the person's presence on or within 1,000 feet of the premises owned by the institution of higher education is not related to their enrollment at such institution.

"(d) In this section:

"(1) The term 'minor' means an individual who has not attained 18 years of age.

"(2) The term 'school' means a public, parochial, or private school that provides elementary or secondary education.

"(3) The term 'school zone' has the meaning given such term in section 921.

"(4) The term 'school-sponsored activity' means any activity that is produced, financed, arranged, supervised, or coordinated by a school or a State educational agency or local educational agency or is under the jurisdiction of a State educational agency or local educational agency.

"(5) The terms 'State educational agency' and 'local educational agency' have the meanings given those terms under section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

"(6) 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)."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. FITZGERALD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 7566, as amended.