

(Purpose: To provide enhanced protection against debt collector harassment of members of the Armed Forces)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

DIVISION _____ FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES FOR SERVICEMEMBERS

SEC. _____ 01. SHORT TITLE.

This division may be cited as the “Fair Debt Collection Practices for Servicemembers Act”.

SEC. _____ 02. ENHANCED PROTECTION AGAINST DEBT COLLECTOR HARASSMENT OF SERVICEMEMBERS.

(a) COMMUNICATION IN CONNECTION WITH DEBT COLLECTION.—Section 805 of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (15 U.S.C. 1692c) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) COMMUNICATIONS CONCERNING SERVICE-MEMBER DEBTS.—

“(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ‘covered member’ means—

“(A) a covered member or a dependent as defined in section 987(i) of title 10, United States Code; and

“(B)(i) an individual who was separated, discharged, or released from duty described in such section 987(i)(1), but only during the 365-day period beginning on the date of separation, discharge, or release; or

“(ii) a person, with respect to an individual described in clause (i), described in subparagraph (A), (D), (E), or (I) of section 1072(2) of title 10, United States Code.

“(2) PROHIBITIONS.—A debt collector may not, in connection with the collection of any debt of a covered member—

“(A) threaten to have the covered member reduced in rank;

“(B) threaten to have the covered member’s security clearance revoked; or

“(C) threaten to have the covered member prosecuted under chapter 47 of title 10, United States Code (the Uniform Code of Military Justice).”.

(b) UNFAIR PRACTICES.—Section 808 of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (15 U.S.C. 1692f) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(9) The representation to any covered member (as defined under section 805(e)(1)) that failure to cooperate with a debt collector will result in—

“(A) a reduction in rank of the covered member;

“(B) a revocation of the covered member’s security clearance; or

“(C) prosecution under chapter 47 of title 10, United States Code (the Uniform Code of Military Justice).”.

SEC. _____ 03. GAO STUDY.

The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study and submit a report to Congress on the impact of this division on—

(1) the timely delivery of information to a covered member (as defined in section 805(e) of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, as added by this division);

(2) military readiness; and

(3) national security, including the extent to which covered members with security clearances would be impacted by uncollected debt.

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, servicemembers report being harassed by predatory debt collectors at a higher rate than the civilian population. Predatory and unscrupulous debt collectors send messages to commanding officers with their private financial information, all in an effort to harass our men and women in uniform—the best among us standing up for us. They harass serv-

icemembers by threatening rank reduction—the debt collectors—revocation of security clearance, or punishment under the military justice code.

These threats cannot be carried out by the debt collectors, and these practices are manipulative, and they undermine our national security by distracting our servicemembers from focusing on their mission and caring for their families. In fact, a 2014 Army Reserve review found that the second leading contributing factor to servicemember suicide was financial stress.

This amendment reinforces the existing protections provided to all Americans but especially those who are putting their lives on the line to protect all of our families and our communities by restricting predatory debt collection practices aimed specifically at our servicemembers.

This bipartisan amendment costs nothing. It has broad support among the Nation’s military and veteran community. They believe, as I do, that debt collectors should not be able to weaponize servicemembers’ services. It even has the support—listen—the support of reputable and responsible debt collectors themselves, the very industry it would affect.

I want to thank Senators BUDD, CORNYN, TILLIS, LUMMIS, and BROWN for their partnership on this, and I look forward to the support of my colleagues in passing this bipartisan amendment to protect our Nation’s servicemembers.

I yield back the balance of my time.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 199

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

Mr. WARNOCK. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 95, nays 2, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 198 Leg.]

YEAS—95

Baldwin	Cassidy	Grassley
Barrasso	Collins	Hagerty
Bennet	Coons	Hassan
Blackburn	Cornyn	Hawley
Blumenthal	Cortez Masto	Heinrich
Booker	Cotton	Hickenlooper
Boozman	Cramer	Hirono
Braun	Crapo	Hoeven
Britt	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Brown	Daines	Johnson
Budd	Duckworth	Kaine
Cantwell	Ernst	Kelly
Capito	Feinstein	Kennedy
Cardin	Fischer	King
Carper	Gillibrand	Klobuchar
Casey	Graham	Lankford

Lee	Peters	Smith
Lujan	Reed	Stabenow
Lummis	Ricketts	Sullivan
Manchin	Risch	Tester
Markey	Romney	Thune
Marshall	Rosen	Tillis
McConnell	Rounds	Tuberville
Menendez	Rubio	Van Hollen
Merkley	Sanders	Vance
Moran	Schatz	Warner
Mullin	Schmitt	Warnock
Murkowski	Schumer	Warren
Murphy	Scott (FL)	Welch
Murray	Scott (SC)	Wyden
Ossoff	Shaheen	Young
Padilla	Sinema	

NAYS—2

Paul Wicker

NOT VOTING—3

Durbin Fetterman Whitehouse

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The yeas are 95, the nays are 2.

Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for the adoption of this amendment, the amendment is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 199) was agreed to.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m. today.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:12 p.m. recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. ROSEN).

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

CHINA

Mrs. FISCHER. Madam President, earlier this month, the Chinese Communist Party’s relentless propaganda efforts rose to the forefront of international discussion yet again. China’s authoritarian government squashes opposition at home without hesitation, but its censorship and propaganda spreads far beyond China’s borders.

The CCP uses an array of insidious means to push its messages across national boundaries. Concerns that the CCP’s influence is seeping into Hollywood continues to grow. This issue flared up once again this month. Why? Well, in a word, “Barbie.” You heard me right. A movie about a plastic doll is the last place you would expect national security questions to arise, but it has.

One trailer for the “Barbie” movie depicted a cartoon map of the title character’s world travels. On the map is a roughly drawn continent of Asia, but it might be more than just a cartoon character’s doodle. The map includes a dotted line extending out from the east shore of China.

Well, that line is curiously similar to what is known as the nine-dash line. Everyone in the defense space is familiar with this line. It is a Chinese-drawn boundary in the South China Sea. China uses this boundary to claim ownership of maritime territory, even

though the United Nations International Court of Justice rejected its claims on that territory in 2016.

The country's neighbors, including Vietnam and the Philippines, they certainly contest these claims as well. China appeals to this false boundary when its naval presence creeps into new areas of the South China Sea, and it intimidates boats, fishermen, and others from neighboring countries who cross that invisible line.

Now, "Barbie," the movie, it is a great movie. Americans loved it this past weekend, but the "Barbie" movie, well, it treads a little too closely to depicting what looks like the nine-dash line. Hollywood needs to become aware of the ways that the CCP tends to push its propaganda. Use of the line is a trigger for geopolitical sensitivities, including its likeness on a map, even as part of a child-like drawing, that has real global ramifications.

Now, you may say: Oh, come on, it is just a movie. But Vietnam's authorities banned "Barbie" from playing in theaters because of its offensive, alleged depiction of the nine-dash line. And members of the Philippines Government, they raised concerns as well, eventually deciding to blur the map line in showings across their country.

Despite the "Barbie" movie's content, allegations of Chinese propaganda in Hollywood are not child's play. China continues to take advantage of our unprecedented global media network to do real damage. It is no accident that China is financing some of the biggest films, and China runs the second largest box office in the world, second only to North America.

When a movie doesn't play in China, Hollywood loses literally billions of dollars. Remember the controversy around "Top Gun's" sequel last year? The Department of Defense, they worked with Paramount Pictures to make that movie happen, but when "Top Gun: Maverick's" first trailer was released in 2019, viewers noticed that the Japanese and Taiwanese flags that were on Tom Cruise's bomber jacket, well, they had been replaced in an attempt to appease China.

The studio wisely reversed course on that decision after a public outcry, but that is not where the CCP's influence ended. The film made no mentions or even implications of the United States' primary adversary, and that is China. Any movie related to our national defense that doesn't bring up China, well, it must be set in an alternative universe because that is the biggest defense challenge facing our country. This isn't a conspiracy theory.

The Presiding Officer is on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and we know well China's strategy. The defense world is well aware that China maintains a well-oiled propaganda machine that is enmeshed in our modern media.

So you may say: Oh, come on, it is just a movie. No, this is a serious problem, so serious that it is one our gov-

ernment should address. We can't allow our Federal Agencies to help elevate messages that support the CCP's goals, and we certainly cannot involve our own Defense Department and taxpayer dollars in entertainment projects that are beholden to Chinese propaganda.

As a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I have successfully secured language in the last two National Defense Authorization Acts to prevent our government's Department of Defense from participating in entertainment projects with ties to the CCP.

Thanks to our persistent efforts, the Department of Defense recently released new regulations around how the Department of Defense can provide assistance to entertainment projects. Pursuant to these NDAA provisions, the Department is now prohibited from assisting with entertainment projects that censor the content of the project in a material manner to advance the national interest of the People's Republic of China.

It is my hope that this new policy will ensure that taxpayer dollars are never involved in anti-American messaging efforts as well as send a clear signal to the CCP that we will no longer turn a blind eye to its propaganda efforts. This is just one example of the many provisions in this year's NDAA that stand up to China and advance our national security.

I encourage my Senate colleagues to vote yes on the NDAA so that we can deliver a strong package that keeps China in line.

I yield the floor.

RECESS UNTIL 4 P.M. TODAY

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The junior Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to recess until 4 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 2:55 p.m., recessed until 4:01 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. MURPHY).

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 4470

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I will shortly ask for unanimous consent to pass bipartisan legislation to extend the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program, also known as CFATS. This critical counterterrorism program was created in the wake of September 11 and the Oklahoma City bombing to ensure that common chemicals could not be stolen or weaponized by terrorists and used in an attack.

Now the program is set to expire on July 27, tomorrow, and we simply can-

not let that happen. There are approximately 3,300 facilities across the United States that participate in this program. These facilities support a range of industries, from chemical manufacturing and distribution to agriculture and food production, paint and coatings operations, and healthcare and pharmaceuticals. In their everyday work, these facilities use materials that, in the wrong hands, can be turned into dangerous weapons. Because these types of industrial or commercially available materials are common and offer a simple pathway to weaponization, terrorists are more likely to try to use them.

By participating in the CFATS Program, facilities work with the Department of Homeland Security to develop a plan to ensure potentially hazardous material is secure. I introduced bipartisan legislation, along with Senators Capito, Carper, and Lankford, to extend this important counterterrorism program for 5 years. The 5-year extension provides regulatory certainty and the stability for the companies and groups that participate in the program, ensuring that they can keep these important safeguards in place for longer.

Companies including Dow, BASF, Lubrizol, and Brenntag North America, along with organizations like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Chemistry Council, the National Association of Chemical Distributors, the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, the Agricultural Retailers Association, and the Fertilizer Institute—all of them support extending this vital national security program for another 5 years.

However, last night, the House passed a 2-year extension with overwhelming bipartisan support. More than 400 Members of the U.S. House voted to extend the program. And while I believe passing a longer extension to provide more certainty for companies and for the DHS would be better, the program will expire tomorrow, and if we do not pass legislation to extend it, our national security could be at risk.

If this body allows this program to expire, the 3,300 facilities will no longer be required to maintain security measures and any new high-risk facilities will not be required to invest in additional security. The Department of Homeland Security will no longer be able to assess whether facilities are high risk or share information about specific terrorist threats connected to chemical facilities. The high-risk chemical facilities would no longer be able to screen individuals who have access to sensitive areas against the Terrorist Screening Database, which is a critical way to ensure that we are keeping these substances from getting into the wrong hands.

Since it was created, CFATS has been extended with bipartisan support four times. We cannot let this vital program expire. We must take urgent action to pass this 2-year extension