

that this work has included reestablishing our embassy operations in Kyiv to stand with Ukraine after Russia's unprovoked, full-scale invasion in 2022.

When we raise the U.S. flag on a new or updated diplomatic facility abroad, it is a powerful signal of our commitment to democracy and peaceful, productive engagement between nations.

In maintaining its facilities around the world, the State Department mitigates security and counterintelligence risks through tailored, site-specific measures that address the particular challenges of a specific locale. The Department has deep expertise in this area, informed by decades of experience to harden our security posture, counter our adversaries, and open our doors to those who wish to learn about and engage with the United States.

Congress has played a role in developing this expertise, too, as evidenced in bipartisan reforms to the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act that we passed into law last Congress. We must continue to ensure the State Department has the flexibility to balance bold, expeditionary diplomacy, while mitigating operational risks.

With this bill before us today, the House Foreign Affairs Committee worked in a bipartisan fashion to ensure the Department has the needed flexibility to advance the Department's ongoing efforts to maintain and open new facilities, even as we seek to minimize risks in embassy construction or maintenance that our competitors could exploit.

I am pleased to support this measure, and I invite my colleagues to do the same. I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure.

In closing, the State Department's efforts to expand our diplomatic footprint and enhance its existing facilities worldwide showcase America's dedication to effective diplomacy and international cooperation.

The operational security and effectiveness of these facilities is paramount, and the State Department has demonstrable success in building facilities tailored to mitigate country-specific risks. Our congressional reforms have supported this mission, providing the necessary framework for safe and dynamic diplomacy while ensuring that State has the flexibility it needs to build and maintain its facilities around the world.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting H.R. 6306, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I again thank Congressman MILLS for his leadership in fixing this national security vulnerability. I also thank Chairman McCAUL, Ranking Member MEEKS, and our Committee on Foreign Affairs colleagues for bringing this critical, bipartisan bill to the floor.

This legislation will ensure that our diplomatic buildings overseas do not

fall victim to the active, ongoing surveillance and espionage efforts of the Chinese Communist Party.

Mr. Speaker, I urge unanimous support for H.R. 6306, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6306, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to direct the Secretary of State to avoid or minimize the acquisition or lease of a consular or diplomatic post built or owned by an entity owned or controlled by the Government of the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### UPHOLDING THE DAYTON PEACE AGREEMENT THROUGH SANCTIONS ACT

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4723) to provide for the imposition of sanctions with respect to foreign persons undermining the Dayton Peace Agreement or threatening the security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4723

*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 "Upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement Through Sanctions Act".

#### SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty, territorial integrity, multi-ethnic character and the prosperity of the Republika Srpska entity, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina entity, and the Brcko District within one Bosnia and Herzegovina;

(2) to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration;

(3) to encourage officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina to resume institutional participation at all levels of government to advance functionality and common-sense reforms for greater prosperity;

(4) to call on Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights;

(5) to support the robust use of targeted sanctions against persons who undermine the Dayton Peace Agreement, as well as the democratic institutions and Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to support peace and stability in that country;

(6) to urge the European Union to join the United States and United Kingdom in sanctioning Milorad Dodik, a member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his actions that undermine the stability and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

(7) to expose and condemn the Government of Russia for its role in fueling instability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and undermining the Dayton Peace Agreement, the role of the Office of the High Representative, and the European Union Force in BiH's Operation Althea;

(8) to work with other regional states, including Serbia and Croatia, to support the territorial integrity and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and

(9) to encourage the United States to use its voice and vote at the United Nations, the Peace Implementation Council and its Steering Board, and other relevant international bodies to support the Office of the High Representative.

#### SEC. 3. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO FOREIGN PERSONS UNDERMINING THE DAYTON PEACE AGREEMENT OR THREATENING THE SECURITY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA.

(a) IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—

(1) LIST REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a list of foreign persons that are determined—

(A) to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have directly or indirectly engaged in, any action or policy that threatens the peace, security, stability, or territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including actions that seek to undermine the authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina's state-level institutions, such as forming illegal parallel institutions or actions that threaten the Office of the High Representative;

(B) to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have directly or indirectly engaged in, any action or policy that undermines democratic processes or institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

(C) to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have directly or indirectly engaged in, or to have attempted, a violation of, or an act that has obstructed or threatened the implementation of, the Dayton Peace Agreement or the Conclusions of the Peace Implementation Conference Council held in London in December 1995, including the decisions or conclusions of the Office of the High Representative, the Peace Implementation Council, or its Steering Board;

(D) to be a member, official, or senior leader of an illegal parallel institution or any other institution that engages in activities described in subparagraph (A), (B) or (C), as determined by the Secretary of State;

(E) to be responsible for or complicit in, or to have directly or indirectly engaged in, or attempted to engage in, corruption related to Bosnia and Herzegovina, including corruption by, on behalf of, or otherwise related to the government in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or a current or former government official at any level of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina, such as the misappropriation of public assets, expropriation of private assets for personal gain or political purposes, corruption related to government contracts or the extraction of natural resources or bribery;

(F) to be an adult family member of any foreign person described in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), (D), or (E), unless the President determines that the adult family member—

(i) has condemned the activity or activities of the foreign person described in any such subparagraph; and

(ii) has taken tangible steps to oppose the activity or activities;

(G) to have knowingly facilitated a significant transaction or transactions for or on behalf of a foreign person described in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), (D), or (E);

(H) to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, a foreign person described in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), (D), or (E); or

(I) to have knowingly materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, a foreign person described in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), (D), or (E).

(2) IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—Upon the submission of each list required by paragraph (1), the President shall impose the sanctions described in subsection (c) with respect to each foreign person identified on the list.

(b) ADDITIONAL MEASURE RELATING TO FACILITATION OF TRANSACTIONS.—The Secretary of the Treasury may, in consultation with the Secretary of State, prohibit or impose strict conditions on the opening or maintaining in the United States of a correspondent account or payable-through account by a foreign financial institution that the President determines has, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act, knowingly conducted or facilitated a significant transaction or transactions on behalf of a foreign person on the list required by subsection (a)(1).

(c) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

(1) PROPERTY BLOCKING.—Notwithstanding the requirements of section 202 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701), the President may exercise of all powers granted to the President by that Act to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of the foreign person if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(2) ALIENS INADMISSIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An alien on the list required by subsection (a)(1) is—

(i) inadmissible to the United States;

(ii) ineligible for a visa or travel to the United States; and

(iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The visa or other documentation issued to an alien on the list required by subsection (a)(1) shall be revoked, regardless of when such visa or other documentation is or was issued.

(ii) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—A visa or other entry documentation revoked under clause (i) shall, in accordance with section 221(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(i)), no longer be valid for travel to the United States.

(d) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) EXCEPTION FOR INTELLIGENCE, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND NATIONAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.—Sanctions under this section shall not apply to any authorized intelligence, law enforcement, or national security activities of the United States.

(2) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT.—Sanctions under subsection (c)(2) shall not apply with respect to the admission of an alien to the United States if the admission of the alien is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, the Convention on Consular Relations, done at

Vienna April 24, 1963, and entered into force March 19, 1967, or other applicable international obligations.

(3) EXCEPTION RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.—Sanctions under this section may not be imposed with respect to transactions or the facilitation of transactions for—

(A) the sale of agricultural commodities, food, medicine, or medical devices;

(B) the provision of humanitarian assistance;

(C) financial transactions relating to humanitarian assistance or for humanitarian purposes; and

(D) transporting goods or services that are necessary to carry out operations relating to humanitarian assistance or humanitarian purposes.

(4) EXCEPTION RELATING TO THE IMPORTATION OF GOODS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The authorities and requirements under this section shall not include the authority or a requirement to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(B) GOOD DEFINED.—In this section, the term “good” means any article, natural or manmade substance, material, supply, or manufactured product, including inspection and test equipment, and excluding technical data.

(e) WAIVER.—The President may, on a case-by-case basis and for periods not to exceed 180 days each, waive the application of sanctions or restrictions imposed with respect to a foreign person under this section if the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees not later than 15 days before such waiver is to take effect that the waiver is vital to the national security interests of the United States.

(f) REGULATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall, not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, prescribe regulations as necessary for the implementation of this Act.

(2) NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 10 days before the prescription of regulations under paragraph (1), the President shall notify the appropriate congressional committees regarding the proposed regulations and the provisions of this Act that the regulations are implementing.

(g) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may exercise all authorities provided under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out this Act.

(h) PENALTIES.—The penalties provided for in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) shall apply to a person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of regulations prescribed to carry out this Act to the same extent that such penalties apply to a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of such section 206.

(i) TERMINATION OF SANCTIONS.—The President may terminate the application of sanctions under this section with respect to a foreign person if the President determines and reports to the appropriate congressional committees not later than 15 days before the termination of the sanctions that—

(1) credible information exists that the foreign person did not engage in the activity for which sanctions were imposed;

(2) the foreign person has been prosecuted and sentenced appropriately for the activity for which sanctions were imposed; or

(3) the foreign person has credibly demonstrated a significant change in behavior, has paid an appropriate consequence for the activity for which sanctions were imposed, and has credibly committed to not engage in an activity described in subsection (a)(1) in the future.

#### SEC. 4. CODIFICATION OF SANCTIONS RELATING TO THE WESTERN BALKANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Each sanction imposed through Executive orders described in subsection (b), including each sanction imposed with respect to a person under such an Executive order, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, shall remain in effect, except as provided in subsection (c).

(b) EXECUTIVE ORDERS SPECIFIED.—The Executive orders specified in this subsection are—

(1) Executive Order 13219 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note); relating to blocking property of persons who threaten international stabilization efforts in the Western Balkans, as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) Executive Order 14033 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note); relating to blocking property and suspending entry into the United States of certain persons contributing to the destabilizing situation in the Western Balkans, as in effect on such date of enactment.

(c) TERMINATION OF SANCTIONS.—The President may terminate the application of a sanction described in subsection (a) with respect to a person if the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that—

(1) such person—

(A) is not engaging in the activity that was the basis for such sanctions; or

(B) has taken significant verifiable steps toward stopping such activity; and

(2) the President has received reliable assurances that such person will not knowingly engage in activity subject to such sanctions in the future.

(d) SANCTIONS RELATING TO THE IMPORTATION OF GOODS UNCHANGED.—This section may not be construed to create any new authorities or requirements related to sanctions on the importation of goods.

#### SEC. 5. CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION IN IMPOSING SANCTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after receiving a request from the chairman and ranking member of one of the appropriate congressional committees with respect to whether a person or foreign person, as the case may be, meets the criteria of a person described in section 3(a)(1) or a person described in Executive Order 13219 or Executive Order 14033 as provided for in section 4(b), or any Executive order issued pursuant to this Act or under the Balkans regulatory regime, the President shall—

(1) determine if the person or foreign person, as the case may be, meets such criteria; and

(2) submit a classified or unclassified report to such chairman and ranking member with respect to such determination that includes a statement of whether or not the President imposed or intends to impose sanctions with respect to such person or foreign person.

(b) SUNSET.—This section shall terminate on the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

#### SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMITTED; ALIEN.—The terms “admitted” and “alien” have the meanings given those terms in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101).

(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

(3) CORRESPONDENT ACCOUNT; PAYABLE-THROUGH ACCOUNT.—The terms “correspondent account” and “payable-through

account” have the meanings given those terms in section 5318A of title 31, United States Code.

(4) DAYTON PEACE AGREEMENT.—The term “Dayton Peace Agreement”, also known as the “Dayton Accords”, means the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, initiated by the parties in Dayton, Ohio, on November 21, 1995, and signed in Paris on December 14, 1995.

(5) FOREIGN FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term “foreign financial institution” has the meaning of that term as determined by the Secretary of the Treasury by regulation.

(6) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term “foreign person” means a person that is not a United States person.

(7) ILLEGAL PARALLEL INSTITUTION.—The term “illegal parallel institution” means an agency, structure, or instrumentality at the Republika Srpska entity level that disrupts the authority of the state-level institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and undermines its constitutional order.

(8) KNOWINGLY.—The term “knowingly”, with respect to conduct, a circumstance, or a result, means that a person has actual knowledge, or should have known, of the conduct, the circumstance, or the result.

(9) PERSON.—The term “person” means an individual or entity.

(10) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term “United States person” means—

(A) a United States citizen or an alien lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence;

(B) an entity organized under the laws of the United States or any jurisdiction within the United States, including a foreign branch of such an entity; or

(C) any person in the United States.

#### SEC. 7. SUNSET.

This Act and the authorities provided by this Act shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Ms. WILD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, in 1995, the Dayton Accords brought an end to more than 3 horrific years of war and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina and ushered in a new era of peace.

Today, this peace is being threatened. Self-serving, corrupt politicians like Milorad Dodik are engaged in a sustained attack on Bosnia’s unity, sovereignty, and multiethnic character.

As Dodik and his cronies know well, a prosperous and western-facing Bosnia and Herzegovina threatens their personal power and ill-gotten wealth. They are willing to tear the country apart to maintain control over their il-

licit patronage networks, aided and abetted by the destructive Putin regime, which fears Bosnia’s integration with the west.

Dodik, who has been under U.S. sanctions for more than 2 years, continues to threaten secession in public interviews and through reckless and inflammatory policies.

According to Treasury, he: “Has used his official BiH position and a network of personal ties and companies to accumulate personal wealth through graft, bribery, and other forms of corruption.”

These actions have drastic consequences. The 2024 Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community concluded that the Western Balkans will face an increased risk of localized interethnic violence during 2024.

At a time when the United States faces conflicts and crises around the world, we cannot afford to see the Western Balkans descend into chaos.

The Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the Bosnian war may be flawed, but it is holding Bosnia together during this period of rising ethnic tension, corruption, and Russian aggression. However, because of the reckless actions of a few cynical elite, Bosnia’s stability and sovereignty are at risk.

As a guarantor of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the United States must use its economic toolkit to deter corruption, obstructionism, and secessionism in Bosnia and promote its accession to Euro-Atlantic institutions.

My bill, the Upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement Through Sanctions Act, does just this. Through this bill, we will impose and codify sanctions against bad actors like Milorad Dodik, who continue their agenda of secessionism, corruption, and destabilization.

□ 1545

Mr. Speaker, sanctions work. In a hearing before the Europe Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Deputy Assistant Secretary Gabriel Escobar shared with us that officials in Bosnia’s Dodik-controlled Serb entity begged the U.S. to please, please, no more sanctions.

However, much more leverage needs to be brought to bear against Dodik’s inner circle, their Russian backers, and the corrupt politicians who recklessly use their country’s dysfunction to grow their power and their wealth. My bill would hold these criminals and politicians accountable and deter others who would seek to undermine peace and stability in the region.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative TURNER, Representative KEAN, and Representative WILD for introducing this bill with me. I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,  
Washington, DC, February 8, 2024.

Hon. MICHAEL MCCAUL,  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Financial Services regarding H.R. 4723, the Upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement Through Sanctions Act. I agree that the Committee shall be discharged from further consideration of the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House Floor. The Committee takes this action with the mutual understanding that, by foregoing consideration of H.R. 4723 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved on this or similar legislation as it moves forward. The Committee also reserves the right to see appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any conference with the Senate involving this or similar legislation, and we request your support for any such request.

Finally, as you mentioned in your letter, I ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this bill be included in your Committee’s report to accompany the legislation, as well as in the Congressional Record during floor consideration thereof.

Sincerely,

PATRICK MCHENRY,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, DC, March 11, 2024.

Hon. PATRICK MCHENRY,  
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCHENRY: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4723, the Upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement Through Sanctions Act, so that the measure may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this measure or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on this bill into the Congressional Record during floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,  
Washington, DC, March 11, 2024.

Hon. MICHAEL MCCAUL,  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: I write regarding H.R. 4723, the Upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement Through Sanctions Act. Provisions of this bill fall within the Judiciary Committee’s Rule X jurisdiction, and I appreciate that you consulted with us on those provisions. The Judiciary Committee agrees that it shall be discharged from further consideration of the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

The Committee takes this action with the understanding that forgoing further consideration of this measure does not in any way

alter the Committee's jurisdiction or waive any future jurisdictional claim over these provisions or their subject matter. We also reserve the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees in the event of a conference with the Senate involving this measure or similar legislation.

I ask that you please include this letter in your committee's report to accompany this legislation or insert this letter in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 4723 on the House floor. I appreciate the cooperative manner in which our committees have worked on this matter, and I look forward to working collaboratively in the future on matters of shared jurisdiction. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

JIM JORDAN,  
*Chairman.*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
Washington, DC, March 11, 2024.

Hon. JIM JORDAN,  
*Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,*  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN JORDAN: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4723, the Upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement Through Sanctions Act, so that the measure may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this measure or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on this bill into the Congressional Record during floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,  
*Chairman.*

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

As the lead Democrat on H.R. 4723, I rise in strong support of this bill.

The United States, working alongside Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia, crafted a tenuous diplomatic settlement to end the fighting and keep the peace in Balkans in the wake of the devastating wars of the 1990s. The resulting framework has been frustratingly imperfect, but it has provided a path forward for Bosnia and, indeed, for the entire region.

This legislation calls attention to the difficulties facing Bosnia as it seeks to join the EU. It calls for critically needed reforms to ensure that all Bosnians can have a voice in their government, and it addresses the forces that threaten the region's fragile peace.

Neither progress nor peace in the region are inevitable. These trends require an enduring commitment to fostering them. The bill reaffirms that U.S. commitment, along with our partners in Europe, to actively maintain peace.

The sanctions imposed under this bill provide a necessary disincentive to ensure that the Dayton Agreements hold

strong and do not unravel under political pressure. The sanctions section include waiver language and appropriate exceptions for intelligence activities, humanitarian aid, and to comply with our international agreements.

Despite clear challenges, Bosnia has made strides on meeting the EU membership criteria for integration. It is in the interest of the United States to help ensure that Bosnia meets its compliance with EU rules and standards, so that its accession to the bloc can happen as soon as viable.

I want to take a moment to recognize and thank my colleague, Representative WAGNER, for leading this effort, as well as for her longstanding work to support peace and progress in this region.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, this bill turns our attention to a region where U.S. presence and diplomacy go a long way.

The European Union also realizes that progress in Bosnia and the surrounding region is not inevitable. In that light, I welcome the EU's decision to open membership negotiations.

Transatlantic cooperation between the U.S. and the EU is essential to not only keeping the peace in the western Balkans, but also ensuring a democratic and prosperous future.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting H.R. 4723, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, as the vice chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and as Representative of the largest Bosnian community outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I know what the consequences will be if we fail to stand strong against destructive politicians who seek to undo years of peace. If we let the Dayton Accords—a symbol of American leadership and commitment—collapse, then we risk seeing violence return to Bosnia. Adversaries like Russia and China would welcome these upheavals and solidify a stronger economic and security foothold.

I remind my colleagues that Congress has acted on this once before. Last Congress, I introduced a similar version of this bill which passed the U.S. House of Representatives with overwhelming bipartisan support.

This time, the stakes are much higher. With our adversaries emboldened like never before, Congress must act and confront these potent threats to peace and stability.

Will we turn a blind eye to corrupt autocrats like Milorad Dodik, or will we uphold the peace secured by the Dayton Accords many years ago?

To me, the choice is obvious.

Time is running out to send a strong deterrent message to bad actors intent on destabilizing the country.

Let's pass this bill again and get it to the President's desk so that the United States has the tools that it needs to break the ethnonationalist and Russian hold on Bosnia's future.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4723, 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. WAGNER. 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.

## PASSPORT SYSTEM REFORM AND BACKLOG PREVENTION ACT

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6610) to provide for the modernization of the passport issuance process, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6610

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Passport System Reform and Backlog Prevention Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Sense of Congress.
- Sec. 4. Standards for passport issuance process.
- Sec. 5. Enhanced information technology solutions to improve the passport issuance process.
- Sec. 6. Research on commercially available information technology solutions.
- Sec. 7. GAO Report.
- Sec. 8. Rule of construction.
- Sec. 9. Definitions.

### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States experienced a major backlog of passport applications and passport processing wait times of up to 13 weeks, exclusive of shipping times.

(2) Over the past several years, the Department has experienced repeated delays in its attempts to modernize the passport issuance process.

(3) The adoption of additional commercially available information technology solutions at several stages of the passport issuance process could greatly enhance and accelerate such process.

(4) The United States passport is a widely recognized and trusted identity and travel document that is of tremendous importance to its bearer around the globe.

### SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) as a routine matter, an adult who has submitted a routine new or renewal passport application should be reliably able to expect that such application will be adjudicated by