

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

the Department, at a reasonable cost, in a time frame which is conducive to international travel;

(2) the Department should seek to further modernize and streamline the passport issuance process to enable a decrease in processing times below pre-pandemic levels of six-to-eight weeks, specifically for routine adult passport renewals with respect to which the Department should seek to decrease average processing times to less than 30 days; and

(3) the Department should take all reasonable steps, including the use of available technology and best practices, to protect the integrity of the passport issuance process, the privacy of passport holders, and the efficiency of processing passport issuance requests.

SEC. 4. STANDARDS FOR PASSPORT ISSUANCE PROCESS.

In administering and modernizing the passport issuance process, the Assistant Secretary shall evaluate the performance of such process against the following criteria:

(1) To maintain a service standard of processing a routine new or renewal adult passport application from document submission until mailing of final documents in an expeditious and reliable timeframe.

(2) To maintain affordable passport fees and surcharges.

(3) To ensure world-class technical, security, and cybersecurity standards for United States passports and the passport issuance process.

(4) To minimize downtime for the Travel Document Issuance System.

(5) To minimize the suspense rate resulting from typographical, clerical, or picture-based errors, including by enabling such suspensions to be resolved electronically.

(6) To provide a streamlined customer experience for passport applicants.

(7) To provide reasonably convenient passport services to United States citizens and nationals living a significant distance from a passport agency, particularly residents in a significant population center more than a 5-hour drive from a passport agency.

SEC. 5. ENHANCED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE THE PASSPORT ISSUANCE PROCESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, shall implement the information technology solutions described in subsection (b) in accordance with the timelines described in such subsection.

(b) ENHANCED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS AND TIMELINES DESCRIBED.—The enhanced information technology solutions and timelines described in this subsection are the following:

(1) Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, shall, including if necessary through the awarding of a contract or expanding an existing, establish a tool to enable congressional offices to monitor the status of individual passport applications being handled as casework by such offices.

(2)(A) Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, shall take all reasonable steps, including if necessary the awarding of a contract for the establishment and ongoing maintenance of a service to provide to passport applicants automated, voluntary proactive communications, by email or text message, for each progress point in the passport issuance process, and for the notification of application errors, and delivery of mail tracking numbers, and reminders of renewal eligibility.

(B) Applicants shall be provided the choice of whether to use the services described in subparagraph (A) and data gained as a result of participation in such services shall not be transferred to any third party outside the Department or its contract awardees.

(C) The services described in subparagraph (A) shall provide separate options for email and text message notification, as well as separate options for processing-related notifications and renewal eligibility notifications.

(3)(A) Consistent with the Bureau's modernization plans and timelines, and subject to the availability of funds, the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, shall seek to enter into a contract or contracts as appropriate, for the establishment and maintenance of a mobile application to allow for the centralization of applicant communication with the Department, including document submission, application status tracking, virtual appointments, access to the notification of application errors, and allowing for passport holders to receive messages from the Department and communicate emergencies to the Department.

(B) The Assistant Secretary shall provide each passport applicant with the option of whether to use the mobile application described in subparagraph (A) or another service of the Department.

(C) As a condition for awarding any contracts described in subparagraph (A), the awardee shall demonstrate that it can begin tests on the solution within one year of the award of the contract and complete implementation, including bug fixes, cybersecurity audits, and customer service testing, not later than two years from the award of the contract.

(4)(A) Consistent with existing law, the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, shall expand the online passport renewal system, including to accommodate electronic acceptance of routine first-time adult applications as applicable, in addition to adult renewal applications in sufficient volume to be able to accommodate most applications by the date that is four years from the date of enactment of this Act.

(B) Planning carried out to implement subparagraph (A) shall prepare the Bureau to verify applications without recourse to the information gained through appearance in person described in section 1 of the Act of June 15, 1917 (22 U.S.C. 213), subject to any additional authorities required.

(C) To meet the objectives described in subparagraphs (A) and (B), the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, shall, to the maximum extent practicable, make use of commercially-available technology solutions, including by seeking to enter into a contract or contracts for the expansion and maintenance of the online passport renewal system to accommodate the functionality described in such subparagraphs.

(D) In expanding the online passport renewal system pursuant to subparagraph (C), the following services should be included or otherwise accounted for:

(i) A customer-friendly, user-friendly internet website or portal to facilitate internet-based submission of passport applications by adults.

(ii) To the extent possible, remote document verification tools and infrastructure, to allow for a passport transaction to be completed entirely remotely.

(iii) To the extent possible, information technology infrastructure not already maintained by the Department.

(5)(A) The Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, shall take all reasonable steps and to the

maximum extent practicable make use of commercially-available technology solutions to implement additional rules-based tools, including by seeking to enter into a contract or contracts for such tools and their maintenance, to adjudicate online passport renewal applications in which no biographical information was changed for citizenship, identity, and entitlement against internal and commercial databases.

(B) The tools described in subparagraph (A) shall be fully operational within 4 years of the date of the enactment of this Act.

(C) The Chief Information Officer shall ensure that the use of the tools do not make passport adjudication more vulnerable to cyberattack.

(D) The Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, shall ensure that the tools described in subparagraph (A) are implemented consistent with the maintenance of standards appropriate to ensuring the integrity of the United States passport.

(E) For purposes of using the tools described in subparagraph (A), the requirement that a passport be issued by the personnel described in the first section of the Act entitled "An Act to regulate the issue and validity of passports, and for other purposes", approved July 3, 1926 (22 U.S.C. 211a), shall be satisfied provided that such personnel oversee the tools described in such subparagraph consistent with the requirements in subparagraph (D).

(c) CERTIFICATION.—In addition to other requirements in this section, not later than 30 days before the Assistant Secretary begins work to procure internally any of the information technology solutions described in subsection (b), the Assistant Secretary, in coordination with the Chief Information Officer, shall certify to the appropriate congressional committees that—

(1) the reasons for procuring such service internally;

(2) the Bureau has sufficient capacity to implement and maintain such services; and

(3) the Bureau cannot procure such services for significantly reduced cost externally.

(d) PREFERENCE.—In procuring and implementing the information technology solutions described in subsection (b), preference should be given to entities with the technical expertise necessary for the project and capacity to deliver timely solutions.

(e) ROLE OF CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief Information Officer's concurrence shall be required before the Assistant Secretary awards a contract pursuant to this section.

(2) RELATING TO SYSTEMS.—With respect to the contracting and implementation of the systems described in subsection (b), the Chief Information Officer shall have—

(A) final decision making authority on the technical feasibility and specifications, cybersecurity requirements, compatibility with existing Department information technology infrastructure, and the feasibility of timelines from a technical standpoint; and

(B) final approval of all technical matters before full implementation.

(3) EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS.—In selecting the services described in subsection (b), the Assistant Secretary and the Chief Information Officer shall include in the criteria for selection—

(A) the ability of the proposal to maintain security, including the cybersecurity, standards appropriate to the United States passport and to protect personally identifiable information;

(B) scalability to accommodate current and future passport demand; and

(C) long-term viability and upgradability.

(f) INTERIM ACTION PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees an action plan on how the Bureau plans to complete the modernization described in this section in conjunction with other related, ongoing steps to modernize the passport issuance process.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The action plan required by paragraph (1) shall include the following elements:

(A) Progress made on implementing the information technology solutions described in subsection (b) within specific timelines, and additional steps planned.

(B) The expected cost and timeline for implementation of the information technology solutions described in subsection (b).

(C) An evaluation of the information technology solutions described in subsection (b) to determine whether the full implementation of such solutions will require additional funding or authorities, including budget estimates and a description of such authorities, as appropriate.

(D) Efforts to ensure world-class cybersecurity standards for protection of passport applicant data and the passport issuance process infrastructure, particularly such infrastructure involved in adjudication of passport applications.

(E) Other specific planned steps that the Bureau will take to achieve the criteria described in section 4.

(g) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 4 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the following:

(1) Progress on each information technology solution described in subsection (b).

(2) Additional information technology solutions the Bureau intends to adopt.

(3) Changes in the cost for implementation of the steps described in the action plan, if applicable.

(h) FORM.—The plans and report required by this section shall be submitted in an unclassified form and may include a classified annex, if necessary.

SEC. 6. RESEARCH ON COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary, in coordination with the Chief Information Officer, shall establish a working group of appropriate Department employees, and contractors as appropriate, to liaise with the private sector for the purposes of identifying commercially available technologies that may be adopted by the Bureau to advance the criteria described in section 4, evaluating proposed technological solutions, and augmenting the Bureau's ongoing modernization efforts.

(b) COMPOSITION.—The working group established pursuant to subsection (a) shall be composed of personnel who can consult on the policy, legal, and technical aspects of the passport issuance process with entities that wish to provide such technologies to the Department.

(c) PILOT PROJECTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the working group established pursuant to subsection (a) should consider piloting not fewer than three commercial information technology systems with potential to accelerate the passport renewal process, reduce the backlog of requests, and backup legacy systems with cloud-based software solutions.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary, in coordination with

the Chief Information Officer, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report—

(1) describing the usefulness of the working group to the Department's ongoing modernization efforts and its reception by private sector actors;

(2) containing a summary of each proposal made to the working group pursuant to this section and whether the Secretary intends to adopt each proposal;

(3) providing recommendations to scale successful solutions.

SEC. 7. GAO REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a comprehensive review of the passport issuance process, including—

(1) the Bureau's goals for timeliness of passport issuance, the basis for such goals, and its performance compared to those goals;

(2) key factors affecting timeliness of passport issuance and the extent to which the Bureau has addressed those factors;

(3) key factors affecting the implementation of technological solutions by the Bureau;

(4) the Bureau's efforts to implement the Travel Document Issuance System (TDIS) and other related information technology systems that support the passport issuance process with a focus on—

(A) whether the Bureau is following leading practices for developing, acquiring, and overseeing related system and infrastructure investments and leveraging existing technologies where appropriate;

(B) whether the program has the workforce to resolve technical issues within the systems; and

(C) identifying any vulnerabilities and limitations of the system that may impact performance, including single points of failure;

(5) opportunities to streamline, expedite, and otherwise enhance the Bureau's passport issuance processes, including opportunities to reduce costs in the passport issuance process;

(6) opportunities to partner with other Federal and State agencies and leverage existing United States Government information sources, such as biometric databases, in support of the application and identity verification and resolution components of the passport issuance process; and

(7) other matters as the Comptroller General may deem appropriate.

(b) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall—

(1) brief the appropriate congressional committees on the review required by subsection (a); and

(2) submit a final report upon completion of such review.

(c) RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date on which the report required by subsection (b)(2) is submitted, the Assistant Secretary and the Chief Information Officer shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on progress toward resolution of each recommendation made in the report required by such subsection and planned steps that will be taken to resolve each recommendation.

SEC. 8. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act may be construed as an offer to procure a service or services or as a guarantee of a contract for such services.

SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

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

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

(2) the term “Assistant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs;

(3) except as otherwise provided, the term “Bureau” means the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the Department;

(4) the term “Chief Information Officer” means the Chief Information Officer of the Bureau;

(5) except as otherwise provided, the term “Department” means the Department of State;

(6) the term “passport issuance process”—

(A) means all steps of passport issuance for a new passport or renewal of a passport, as appropriate, from the applicant's submission of documents through document processing and application adjudication to mailing of printed passports; and

(B) includes—

(i) the passport application submission, which includes—

(I) the portion of the passport issuance process from and including passport acceptance by a passport acceptance agent until documents are received by the Department; and

(II) payment processing and mail shipping times; and

(ii) the passport application processing, which includes the portion of the passport issuance process from the reception of completed applications and their distribution to passport agencies for adjudication until finished passports and application documents are mailed to applicants; and

(7) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of State.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) and the gentlewoman 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 to include extraneous material on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA), who is the author of this bill.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I will try not to take more time than is necessary for a bipartisan bill that has broad support, but I do rise today in support of H.R. 6610, the Passport System Reform and Backlog Prevention Act.

I became the author of this bill not in the usual way as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, but actually as a man who has three constituent service personnel who spend a great deal of their time dealing with the fact that when a backlog becomes pervasive, what ends up happening is every passport renewal becomes an emergency, and it becomes an expedited payment. It becomes, in short, a problem that should not have happened.

We certainly understand that during COVID there were a number of problems. One of them was the State Department had never prepared for being able to, in any remote way, process passports. So during that time, the backlog became understandably immense.

Be that as it may, in the several years since COVID has passed, the backlog has continued, and it has never reached an acceptable point for the American people.

Even today, Mr. Speaker, when you surrender a passport for renewal, you have no idea whether it will be weeks or even months before you get one. Most people are advised to pay the expedited fee. In fact, the expedited fee seldom gives them the speed that was intended.

We have talked to several countries, if you will, not necessarily our peers, but countries that have the same challenges we have. Britain, Japan, and Australia routinely reauthorize within a matter of days while we take a 5- to 8-week turnaround.

That is unacceptable. We are the country that effectively created the computer, created automation, and created the ability for something as mundane as adding a new picture to a previously issued passport. We should and could beat this.

The modernization is the first since the days of the early modem, the item that made sound and certainly could transport only a small amount of information.

Congressional intervention is needed. The State Department understands that, and for that reason, we have five basic principles in this, the most important of which is that we ask for private-sector techniques to be used and, in fact, for the State Department to work with the private sector that is more than capable of creating a faster system. In fact, some American companies are processing passports for other countries.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6610.

As we all recall, the State Department experienced an unprecedented level of demand for passports after a global slowdown in travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our constituents were frustrated by the significant processing wait times they faced in securing their passports.

As this bill moved through the Foreign Affairs Committee, we were pleased to learn that the State Department had achieved pre-pandemic passport processing times again. Nonetheless, the work we must undertake going forward is to ensure that the Bureau of Consular Affairs and other relevant department entities have the tools, analysis, and resources that they need to sustain ups and downs in consular demand. The State Department is

already working to modernize and streamline its passport processing, and this legislation supports those efforts.

This bill, as amended by the Foreign Affairs Committee, will further modernize passport processing through a range of important mechanisms. We must not saddle the department with unfunded mandates or inefficient solutions.

Congress must offer guidance and support to ensure that the State Department can get the job of modernization done. Americans deserve the best practices and smartest technologies to inform the department's provision of consular services.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to partner with my colleagues in Congress, at the State Department, and beyond to advance this objective.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, the unprecedented demand for passports post-pandemic created significant backlogs at the Department of State and frustratingly long passport processing times. I am glad that those processing times are now back at pre-pandemic levels and that the State Department's consular bureau is already modernizing its passport processing.

Be that as it may, it is our responsibility to ensure that the department has what it needs to handle any future shifts in demand. This bill will ensure that American travelers can always count on efficient and reliable passport services by integrating cutting-edge practices and technologies into our consular services.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting H.R. 6610, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have worked with Mr. ISSA and our Foreign Affairs colleagues to bring this bill before the House today.

H.R. 6610 modernizes processing capabilities at the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs. That means new performance standards for issuing passports, new tools for our case-workers to track our constituents' passport requests, and new text and email notifications for Americans throughout the whole passport process so they know where their applications stand and how much longer the process is likely to take.

Finally, H.R. 6610 requires the State Department to expand the online passport renewal system so that Americans can apply for and get the travel documents they need as efficiently as possible.

I commend Representative ISSA for prodding the State Department to adopt the best commercially available technology solutions. The private sector has much to offer that will reduce wait times and streamline bureaucracy at the State Department.

I also thank Chairman MCCAUL, Ranking Member MEEKS, and the bipartisan members of the Foreign Af-

fairs Committee who voted unanimously for this bill during the committee markup.

The American people deserve a more responsive passport process when they seek to exercise their right to travel. For that reason, H.R. 6610 deserves our unanimous support.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EDWARDS). 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. 6610, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1600

CONDEMNING THE ILLEGAL ABDUCTION OF CHILDREN FROM UKRAINE TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 149) condemning the illegal abduction of children from Ukraine to the Russian Federation, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 149

Whereas, on January 12, 1951, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (commonly known as the "Genocide Convention"), of which the Russian Federation is a party, came into effect;

Whereas, on February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation escalated its eight-year-long occupation of sovereign Ukrainian territory by launching an unprovoked large-scale invasion of Ukraine;

Whereas, on March 9, 2022, Russian Forces attacked a maternity hospital in Mariupol, Ukraine, resulting in the deaths of 5 individuals and injuries to 17 other individuals;

Whereas, on March 22, 2022, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry announced that the Russian military had illegally abducted and forcibly transferred 2,389 Ukrainian children from temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine;

Whereas, on June 2, 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated that 200,000 children are among the Ukrainians who have been forcibly transferred to Russia;

Whereas forcibly transferring children of one group to another group is a violation of Article II(e) of the Genocide Convention;

Whereas Maria Lvova-Belova, Children's Rights Commissioner for the President of Russia, admitted to abducting and forcibly transferring Ukrainian children and facilitating forced adoptions to Russian families;

Whereas Ukrainian authorities have stated that a number of the abducted and forcibly transferred Ukrainian children have families who remain in Ukraine, but have been separated due to the renewed Russian invasion;

Whereas, on June 16, 2022, Russian authorities announced that children born in occupied Ukrainian territories after the February 24, 2022, invasion will be deemed Russian citizens;