

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;

Whereas, on June 22, 2022, the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner verified that at least 320 children have been killed since Russia's renewed invasion began;

Whereas, on July 11, 2022, United Nations Secretary General António Guterres ordered an investigation into the deaths and injuries of Ukrainian children; and

Whereas, on July 13, 2022, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken issued a statement calling upon Russia to "immediately halt its systemic filtration operations in Ukraine", which have caused the disappearance, detention, or forcible deportation of between 900,000 and 1,600,000 Ukrainians (approximately 260,000 of whom are children): Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) declares that the abduction and forcible transfer of children and facilitation of illegal adoptions is contrary to Russia's obligations under the Genocide Convention and amounts to genocide;

(2) further declares that the Russian Federation is attempting to wipe out a generation of Ukrainian children, thereby crippling Ukraine's ability to nurture the next generation of Ukrainian citizens and leaders and to rebuild their country after Russia's unprovoked war, with the purpose of demolishing Ukraine's unique language, culture, history, and identity;

(3) notes with concern that the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation has significantly increased the risks of children being exposed to human trafficking and exploitation, child labor, gender-based violence, hunger, injury, trauma, deprivation of education and shelter, and death; and

(4) holds the Government of the Russian Federation, under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, responsible for the wrongful and illegal abduction and forcible transfer of children from Ukraine and officially condemns these actions in the strongest terms.

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 include extraneous material on this measure.

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 myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine, we continue to witness unspeakable acts perpetrated by Vladimir Putin's forces. Since the start of the war, Ukrainian officials estimate that over 120,000 war crimes have been committed by lawless Russian invaders.

One of the most horrific acts being conducted by the Putin regime is the kidnapping of Ukrainian children to Russia and occupied territories. Since February 2022, more than 19,000 children have been forcibly deported from their homeland—possibly many, many more.

Ukraine's Ambassador to the United Nations has stated that: "Ukraine has

strong grounds to believe that several hundred thousand Ukrainian children were forcibly, unlawfully taken."

Not only have these children been kidnapped and handed over to Russian families, but they have also been forced into pro-Russia reeducation systems. They are being brainwashed, taught to hate their home country and to love their oppressors, Russia.

Kidnapped Ukrainian children are being taught that Ukraine does not exist as a sovereign country and that Russia is conducting some sort of justified mission for mankind. Additionally, if they don't comply or fall in line, these children face punishment and abuse.

Russia's depravity gets even more twisted, Mr. Speaker. There are reports that kidnapped Ukrainian teenagers are being conscripted to fight in Ukraine on behalf of the Russian Federation. Ukrainian officials say Russia's efforts specifically target teenagers so that they can be turned into soldiers once they reach the age of 18.

Vladimir Putin and his commissioner for children's rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, can claim all they want that they are saving these children, but we know their true intent—the complete eradication of Ukrainian culture and identity.

Both U.S. statute and international law define genocide as acts committed with intent to destroy a people, in whole or in part, including forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

I was proud to join my colleague from Pennsylvania, Representative WILD, in introducing the resolution before us today. It rightfully condemns this barbarism and calls it what it is: genocide. We were there together on the Ukrainian border. We were there and saw Ukrainian refugees and children who have suffered this kind of abuse at the hands of Vladimir Putin.

Mr. Speaker, during our markup, this resolution received unanimous bipartisan support from the Foreign Affairs Committee. Today, the entire House has the opportunity and the moral duty to denounce Russia's genocide against these children of Ukraine.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, Representative WILD, for shedding light on these heartbreaking abuses.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of our colleagues to support this important resolution, and 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. Res. 149. I introduced this resolution on behalf of my district, which counts one of the country's largest Ukrainian-American communities. Together, we have advocated and organized for this moment, and I recognize my Ukrainian-American constituents and all the extraordinary Ukrainian-American leaders whose tireless efforts led to this legislation coming to the floor of the House for a vote.

I also remember the time that Representative WAGNER and I and a couple of other members of the Foreign Affairs Committee stood right at the border of Ukraine on the Poland side and watched as children and mothers streamed across the border. It was tragic and really hard to watch, but those were the fortunate children, as we have learned. Far too many Ukrainian children have been abducted to Russia.

This vote is about sending an unequivocal message to Vladimir Putin that we stand with the Ukrainian people and that we will not stop working for justice and accountability when it comes to the atrocities that Russian forces have systematically employed in this war of aggression.

We must be clear. Russian forces have engaged in an effort to destroy Ukraine's democracy, its sovereignty, its territorial integrity, and, ultimately, its identity itself. Their crimes against children stand out as the most heinous aspect of a much larger strategy, a relentless campaign of state violence against the most vulnerable members of Ukrainian society.

As part of this effort, Russian forces have abducted and forcibly relocated thousands of Ukrainian children to Russian-occupied and affiliated areas in blatant violation of Article II(e) of the Genocide Convention.

The Russian objective is clear: to eradicate the young generations of the Ukrainians by attempting to destroy their sense of national and cultural identity. We cannot be silent in the face of these violations of Ukrainians' most fundamental rights and dignity.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for working to pass this legislation unanimously through the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Finally, as meaningful as this vote is to me and my constituents, I call on the leadership of this House to hold an even more consequential vote. Mr. Speaker, the people's Representatives must be able to vote on the Senate's supplemental package containing critical assistance for Ukraine as well as humanitarian assistance for the people of Ukraine, for the Palestinian people, and for so many other populations around the world who are in dire need of assistance. We must come together in support of this national and global priority.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to think about the Ukrainian Americans across this country whose relatives in Ukraine are facing a relentless campaign of aggression simply because of their unrelenting quest for a democratic Ukrainian state.

We must stand with them. We must stand with the next generation of Ukrainians and ensure that they are able to continue their proud legacy.

As a people, Ukrainians have endured despite extraordinary hardship experienced across generations. Today, they are fighting for their future as a sovereign, independent democracy whose

freedom has been hard-won and is imperiled today.

Together, let us join in passing this resolution here on the floor of the House of Representatives by a resounding bipartisan margin, and let us work toward passing the assistance for the Ukrainian people that they so urgently need.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, Vladimir Putin's barbarism knows no bounds. The actions of his lawless forces against the people of Ukraine, including the forcible deportation of innocent Ukrainian children, constitute genocide.

We have the opportunity to state that truth plainly today and to stand with the grieving families of Ukraine whose children are still kidnapped inside Russia.

Mr. Speaker, I urge unanimous support for this resolution, 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 agree to the resolution, H. Res. 149, 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.

REVIEW OF INTERAGENCY DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6602) to amend the Export Control Reform Act of 2018 relating to the review of the interagency dispute resolution process, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6602

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

SECTION 1. REVIEW OF INTERAGENCY DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS.

Section 1763(c) of the Export Control Reform Act of 2018 (50 U.S.C. 4822(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking “In any case” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In any case”;

(2) by inserting “countries subject to a comprehensive United States arms embargo,” after “matters relating to”;

(3) by striking “may be decided” and inserting “shall be decided”;

(4) by adding at the end the following: “The chair of the Committee is authorized to decide any case or matter described in the preceding sentence in which the Committee is unable to decide the case or matter by majority vote.”; and

(5) by further adding at the end the following:

“(2) DEFINITION.—In paragraph (1), the term ‘country subject to a comprehensive United States arms embargo’ means—

“(A) any country listed on table 1 to paragraph (d)(1) of section 126.1 of title 22, Code of Federal Regulations (as such section is in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this paragraph); and

“(B) the Russian Federation.”.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCORMICK. 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 Georgia?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the People's Republic of China, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, is waging an all-out economic war against the United States. The CCP is using unfair and illegal means to try to dominate the market in dual-use technologies that are shaping the modern battlefield.

Fortunately, the CCP still significantly relies on technologies from the United States, our allies, and our partners to develop advanced dual-use capabilities. For that reason, export controls are a critical tool for the United States to slow down and, in some cases, stop China's ability to develop certain capabilities.

For this strategy to work, we have to deny Chinese licenses to use American technology. Unfortunately, based on data reviewed and released by the House Foreign Affairs Committee, those licenses are rarely denied by the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security, known as BIS.

For instance, during a 6-month period spanning 2020 and 2021, BIS denied less than 2 percent of licenses and approved \$100 billion worth of licenses to Huawei and SMIC. Both of those companies are considered CCP military companies by the Department of Defense and are CCP national champion technology firms.

When deciding whether to approve or deny a license, BIS generally consults other agencies that make up the Operating Committee for Export Policy, the Departments of Defense, Energy, State, and Commerce.

However, BIS is not required to follow those other agencies' advice. Sometimes, BIS actively ignores it. Statistics provided by BIS for fiscal years 2017 through 2019 show that there was a 60 percent increase of nonconsensus decisions by the operating com-

mittee during that time. In other words, over half the time, 60 percent of the time, they ignored everybody else's objections and went ahead and did whatever they wanted to, just one person's decision. That is not good.

More than 10 percent of the time, it appears the operating committee chair, which is part of the BIS, took the position that only one other operating committee member supported—also not good.

Since the Department of Commerce is both the chair and a member, this data raises concerns that Commerce may be abusing its position on the operating committee to override the considered objections of other agencies. Otherwise, why even be there?

□ 1615

This bill provides a commonsense solution to those dangers: When a license for China comes before the operating committee, the decision to approve or deny the license should be based on a majority vote by all of its members.

Each agency brings a unique view to a license and should have a voice and a vote. It makes little sense for BIS to have sole discretionary and decisional authority on those consequential issues.

In fact, when dealing with satellites and hot section jet engines, the operating committee already requires a majority vote. So my bill simply puts licenses to China on the same level as licenses for certain advanced technologies.

Chairman Xi has ordered his military to have the capability to invade Taiwan by 2027. This is a country that produces 100 percent of the chips in AI that we consume here in America, I might add.

It makes no sense for our Department of Defense to not have a vote on what capabilities may fall into the hands of the Chinese military.

I thank my colleagues on the Foreign Affairs Committee for their unanimous, bipartisan support for this important national security reform bill during the committee markup back in December.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6602, and 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 support of H.R. 6602.

In recent years, our use of export controls to safeguard our national security has expanded greatly. However, these efforts have not come with a commensurate increase in the budget of the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security, or BIS, which is the U.S. Government entity leading export control efforts.

The Biden administration has vastly expanded controls against Russia and Belarus since the horrific invasion of Ukraine and has imposed unprecedented unilateral controls against China in the semi-conductor space.