

side of this critical bill, and, frankly, senior Members of this body who joined in the debate, as well.

This piece of legislation, as has been shared, just reauthorizes very critical elements of the U.S. Fire Administration and its programs to support firefighters and lifesaving EMS workers to make them better protected. It is just really one of the best things that we can do in this Chamber.

Just last week, I was visited by Fire Chief Robert Jennison. He lives in my district in West Bloomfield, and he is a fire chief in Livonia, a community I used to represent. He mentioned this bill and how important it is for his fire stations and for his activities.

We should be really proud to be coming together in a bipartisan way to reauthorize our fire safety efforts here in the United States of America.

We also have to be real with ourselves because over a 10-year period, fire-related deaths in this country rose by 33 percent.

That has been unnecessary, and it has been an unnerving loss of life. With the National Fire Protection Association estimating that once every 23 seconds, a fire department somewhere in our country responds to a fire emergency, we must do more to support our local heroes.

□ 1745

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for closing.

Mr. Speaker, I celebrate the Science Committee, which always operates on a bipartisan basis. Once again, we have worked together on the provisions in this bill.

I will highlight something I mentioned in passing, which is the fusion energy program. For years and years, people have said that fusion energy is always 50 years away. That was before ignition was achieved at Lawrence Livermore National Lab, the National Ignition Facility, not once, not twice, but many times. We now have a private-sector fusion industry that is charging ahead and making tremendous progress.

I have heard, when I have visited with them, their praise for the NRC's guidelines. This is not fission. It doesn't have the challenge of nuclear energy, so it doesn't need the same kind of regulatory scheme. It needs to be sensible, streamlined, solid, and certain.

That is what those standards are. Putting them into law is going to help private industry rush forward. I think all of us hope that they will be as successful as they plan to be within the next 5 years. This act will help that happen.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of the House to vote for this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I again thank my House and Senate colleagues and Chairman PETERS for co-leading this important reauthorization.

As I previously mentioned, this legislation is a strong commitment to the safety and well-being of our first responders, empowering them to overcome challenges and fulfill their mission of safeguarding our communities. That will help make all Americans safer.

The ADVANCE Act, as we have heard in this Chamber, is also critically important to pass today.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bipartisan and bicameral legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KEAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 870, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. 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.

NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION SAFETY TEAM ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2024

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4143) to amend the National Construction Safety Team Act to enable the National Institute of Standards and Technology to investigate structures other than buildings to inform the development of engineering standards, best practices, and building codes related to such structures, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4143

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 "National Construction Safety Team Enhancement Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION SAFETY TEAM ENHANCEMENT.

The National Construction Safety Team Act is amended—

(1) in section 2 (15 U.S.C. 7301)—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) in the first sentence, by striking "buildings" and inserting "structure"; and

(ii) by inserting after the first sentence the following new sentence: "In instances in which the failure of the building or structure is the proper subject for investigation by another Federal agency, the Director shall defer to the authority of such agency.";

(B) in subsection (b)—

(i) in paragraph (1), by striking "buildings" and inserting "the built environment"; and

(ii) in paragraph (2)—

(I) in subparagraph (A), by inserting "or structure" after "building";

(II) in subparagraph (C), by striking "building standards, codes, and practices" and inserting "engineering standards, practices, and building codes"; and

(III) in subparagraph (D), by striking "buildings" and inserting "the built environment"; and

(C) in subsection (c)(1)—

(i) in subparagraph (G), by inserting "or structure" after "building"; and

(ii) in subparagraph (J)—

(I) by inserting "or structure" after "building"; and

(II) by inserting "or the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act of 2004" after "1977";

(2) in section 4 (15 U.S.C. 7303)—

(A) by striking the term "building" each place it appears; and

(B) by inserting "building or structure" before "failure" each place it appears;

(3) in section 7 (15 U.S.C. 7306), by inserting "or structure" after "building";

(4) in section 8 (15 U.S.C. 7307)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting "or structure" after "building";

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking "standards, codes, and practices" and inserting "engineering standards, practices, and building codes"; and

(C) in paragraph (4), by inserting "and structure" after "building";

(5) in section 9(2) (15 U.S.C. 7308(2)), by striking "building standards, codes, and practices" each place it appears and inserting "engineering standards, practices, and building codes"; and

(6) in section 14 (15 U.S.C. 7312), by striking "building standards, codes, or practices" and inserting "engineering standards, practices, and building codes".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KEAN) and the gentleman from California (Ms. LOFGREN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. 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 H.R. 4143, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4143, the National Construction Safety Team Enhancement Act of 2024, offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN).

The National Construction Safety Team, or NCST, is a program run by the National Institute of Standards and Technology to investigate major building disasters and failures so that we can develop better construction standards in the future.

Following NIST's investigation of the Twin Towers collapse after 9/11, they issued recommendations that have significantly impacted how we design and construct buildings, making them safer and more durable.

Currently, NIST is investigating the 2021 collapse of the Surfside condominiums in south Florida, which killed nearly 100 people.

While NIST does exceptional work in these investigations, their scope is limited to building failures. This bill will

expand that authority to general infrastructure failures, which currently are not investigated in this way.

This is a smart bill that will ensure that we can utilize NIST's unique expertise to better understand any failures in roads, bridges, dams, and other infrastructure and, most importantly, develop best practices and guidances so that we can avert future tragedies.

This legislation builds off the authorities NIST received after 9/11 to conduct technical investigations of building failures and ensures these efforts do not impede on criminal or other law enforcement investigations.

I thank Ranking Member LOFGREN for introducing this bill along with Chairman LUCAS.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of my bill, the National Construction Safety Team Enhancement Act of 2024.

Last year, there was massive flooding along California's central coast, which left communities really across the State vulnerable. In my district, the Pajaro River's levee failed, forcing over 1,500 people to evacuate and putting thousands of homes at risk. Many of them were flooded.

In May 2023, I joined Representative PANETTA, Senator PADILLA, and the late Senator Feinstein in asking the Army Corps of Engineers to provide emergency assistance to help with the levee.

Last August, the Biden-Harris administration heeded our call to action and committed \$20 million to repair the levee and address erosion on the left bank of the Pajaro River. That has now been concluded, and these communities have been protected, at least with the emergency repairs.

As with this small rural community in my own district, the climate crisis continues to put massive strains on aging infrastructure across the United States.

While recovery and reconstruction efforts continue, we have to do more to understand the causes of destructive and life-threatening events, like the Pajaro River levee failure, to make sure it doesn't happen again. Unfortunately, there's no agency currently authorized to conduct thorough technical investigations of failure of general infrastructure, like levees, dikes, bridges, or dams.

When it comes to buildings, the National Institute of Standards and Technology has been charged by Congress with conducting investigations in order to improve the building codes and standards used to design and maintain them. The National Construction Safety Team, or NCST, dispatches experts to work alongside other agencies to investigate major building disasters, to improve the scientific understanding around these failures, and to prevent future catastrophes.

This bill expands NCST's existing authority to include investigations of general infrastructure failures. These teams will investigate incidents involving other structures that we also rely on every day in order to improve the safety and resilience of American communities.

The tragic destruction of the Francis Scott Key Bridge into the mouth of the Patapsco River in Baltimore underscores the immediate need for this legislation. The impact of that catastrophe is being felt all across the United States.

NIST needs the authority to investigate major infrastructure failures so that they may improve future engineering standards and building codes to guard against such failures in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LUCAS for his partnership on this bill and so many other things.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this timely and necessary legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. STEVENS), my colleague on the Science Committee.

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I thank again Ranking Member LOFGREN, particularly in light of her remarkable leadership in crafting and introducing this bill. I join both of my colleagues to shine a light on the deep and critical importance of H.R. 4143, the National Construction Safety Team Enhancement Act.

We all know that NIST is the little engine that could within our Federal Government, doing so much with little resources and showing the true benefit of where and how we invest taxpayer dollars for the greater implications of society and safety. We know that the National Construction Safety Team within NIST is modeled after the National Transportation Safety Team, both expert operations that get dispatched to the site of major building disasters to investigate the cause and identify preventive solutions.

However, the existing authority only extends to buildings, and it leaves out major swaths of our built environment, as the ranking member mentioned, like bridges and levees, which, just frankly, leaves our Nation vulnerable.

This legislation will expand the safety team's existing authority to better investigate those failures of infrastructure in structures other than buildings.

This really couldn't come at a more important time. I know this is deeply critical to residents in Michigan. We want to be in a place where we are creating resilient structures and recognizing some of the damaging impacts of climate change and rising sea levels. That is the extreme weather environment we are in.

I thank the ranking member and all on the Science Committee. I am proud

to be a cosponsor of this bill and eager to see it passed in the House of Representatives.

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

In closing, I am proud of this bill. If we make this the law, America will be safer, full stop. I am happy that we were able to do it on a bipartisan basis, and I am looking forward to quick action in the Senate.

I thank again the chairman of the committee, Mr. LUCAS, for his collaboration on this and so many other things.

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

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

This is a commonsense, practical policy that supports science and innovation to improve people's lives. I encourage my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation to ensure that NIST can utilize its unique expertise to conduct these technical investigations on major failures to our infrastructure.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KEAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4143, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. KEAN of New Jersey. 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.

□ 1800

PAYING TRIBUTE TO LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPUTY ALFREDO "FREDDY" FLORES

(Mr. MIKE GARCIA of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MIKE GARCIA of California. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I rise today to pay tribute to a peace-maker of California's 27th Congressional District who was taken from us too soon.

On April 20 of this year, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy Alfredo "Freddie" Flores tragically passed away at the age of 51 after suffering injuries during a training exercise last October.

He is survived by his wife Maggie and his children, Nathaniel, Kayla, Victoria, and Adrian.

While our community is grieving this tragic loss, we were also blessed by his extraordinary life and the security