

Too many Americans have experienced the devastation caused by illicit drugs like fentanyl and xylazine. These substances have infiltrated our neighborhoods, torn families apart, and claimed countless lives across our great Nation. From Long Island to Los Angeles, no community has been spared, and for far too long, illegal drug smugglers have made it their mission to poison our streets with these illicit substances.

Every day, our law enforcement officers, those on the front lines of this battle, are forced to confront these threats with often outdated and inadequate tools. That is why this legislation is so important.

The act will authorize the Department of Homeland Security to conduct critical research and development, testing, and evaluation of state-of-the-art detection equipment. This legislation will also empower Federal, State, local, and Tribal law enforcement agencies with the best technology available to detect and intercept even the smallest amounts of these dangerous substances.

This legislation will also create an important new statutory responsibility for the Science and Technology Directorate at DHS to focus on three key areas: one, developing portable detection equipment; two, improving technologies to separate complex mixtures; and, three, leveraging artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Let me be clear. This is not just about equipment and technology. This is about the lives that we have a duty to protect. It is about ensuring that a child does not lose a parent to a lethal dose of fentanyl. It is about preventing the next wave of overdose deaths that leaves yet another community in mourning. It is about making sure that every law enforcement officer has the tools they need to safely and effectively do their job.

I thank my friend from the other side of the aisle and fellow Homeland Security Committee member, Congressman LOU CORREA, for partnering with me in introducing this critical bipartisan legislation and Senators CORNYN, OSSOFF, and SINEMA for their partnership in the Senate in this vital legislation.

I also thank the coalitions of organizations representing law enforcement professionals, public health advocates, and local governments across the Nation that have endorsed this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote “yes” on the DETECT Fentanyl and Xylazine Act. Let’s give our law enforcement the resources they need, let’s protect our communities, and let’s save lives.

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

Republicans and Democrats alike recognize the challenges facing law enforcement in the detection of dangerous drugs like fentanyl. H.R. 8663 is a step in the right direction, and I urge my colleagues to support it. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time. As more and more Americans are negatively impacted by fentanyl and other deadly drugs, it is important to take steps to mitigate and detect the flow of these drugs over our borders. I urge passage of H.R. 8663, which will develop a greater capacity to detect, identify, and disrupt illicit substances. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GIMENEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 8663.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUBTERRANEAN BORDER DEFENSE ACT

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7404) to require annual reports on counter illicit cross-border tunnel operations, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7404

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 “Subterranean Border Defense Act”.

SEC. 2. ANNUAL REPORTS ON COUNTER ILLICIT CROSS-BORDER TUNNEL OPERATIONS.

Paragraph (2) of section 7134(a) of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117-263; 6 U.S.C. 257 note) is amended by inserting “and annually thereafter” after “development of the strategic plan”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GIMENEZ) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. IVEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 7404, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 7404, the Subterranean Border Defense Act.

Due to President Biden, Vice President HARRIS, and Secretary Mayorkas’ collective failures and refusal to secure our border, transnational criminal organizations are unchecked in their efforts to infiltrate into the United States.

These illicit pathways into our country have only made it easier for criminals to bring their illegal business into the homeland, from human trafficking to drug smuggling deadly fentanyl and other drugs that are being funneled from nations afar, including Communist China.

H.R. 7404 will require DHS to provide annual reports on its efforts to counter illicit tunnel operations.

I commend the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE) for his leadership on this effort and urge strong support for the measure.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill because we should have more oversight and information on the threat of tunnels going under our borders and the actions our government is taking to counter them.

Tunnels are used by transnational criminal organizations looking to make a profit, and most of the people using them are not Chinese.

Over the past 30 years, cartels have created illegal tunnels under border walls and barriers to smuggle people and drugs into this country and send out money and firearms, including assault weapons.

Since 1990, law enforcement has discovered more than 230 tunnels across U.S. borders.

These tunnels can be sophisticated. In 2019, CBP discovered a tunnel near the San Diego, California, and Tijuana, Mexico, border that was over three-quarters of a mile long.

This bill simply creates an annual reporting requirement to keep Congress informed on the DHS’ efforts to counter illicit cross-border tunnels and hold bad actors accountable.

The information this bipartisan piece of legislation requires will help inform Congress of the situation on the border and what authorities or resources might be needed.

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

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE), the author of this legislation.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of my bill, the Subterranean Border Defense Act, a bipartisan piece of border security legislation that I have introduced alongside Congressman CORREA from California.

Effective border security is created by overlapping deterrents. That is something we are desperately lacking at our border.

The Subterranean Border Defense Act would help us address the growing threat of illicit cross-border tunnels by requiring annual reports to Congress on counter-tunnel operations, fortifying our security system at the border.

Put simply, this would help us ensure that Congress has the necessary data to forge another much-needed layer of defense.

As transnational criminal organizations continue to grow in both size and sophistication, illicit cross-border tunnels along the southwest border of the United States represent a significant and growing threat to national security.

Congress must address this deadly threat and ensure U.S. Customs and Border Protection has the resources needed to acquire counter-tunnel technology.

Since 1990, officials have discovered more than 140 tunnels that have breached the U.S. border with an 80 percent increase in tunnel activity occurring since 2008.

Over the years, CBP has worked to combat these tunnels as part of their overall strategy. In fact, the United States conducts research, development, and test activities with Israel who must contend with a vast network of Hamas tunnels originating in the Gaza Strip. This partnership helps us detect and destroy tunnels in our respective countries.

The FY23 NDAA mandated that CBP submit a one-time report to Congress on a strategic plan for countering illicit cross-border tunnel operations.

This singular report has since led Congress to conduct critical oversight and has enabled CBP to formalize many of the processes, technologies, and resources needed to counteract illegal tunnels under the U.S.-Mexico border.

My bill would expand on this success by mandating a report every year going forward to ensure Congress has sufficient knowledge and oversight regarding this dynamic threat.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this legislation for a secure southern border.

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I believe this bill is a step in the right direction.

Receiving information from the Department of Homeland Security on an annual basis will improve Congress' efforts to counter illicit cross-border tunnels and hold bad actors accountable.

I support this bipartisan piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the bipartisan Subterranean Border Defense Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GIMENEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7404.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COUNTERING THE PRC MALIGN INFLUENCE FUND AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2023

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1157) to provide for the authorization of appropriations for the Countering the People's Republic of China Malign Influence Fund, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1157

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 "Countering the PRC Malign Influence Fund Authorization Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR COUNTERING THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA MALIGN INFLUENCE FUND.

(a) COUNTERING THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA MALIGN INFLUENCE FUND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated \$325,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2027 for the Countering the People's Republic of China Malign Influence Fund to counter the malign influence of the Chinese Communist Party and the Government of the People's Republic of China and entities acting on their behalf globally.

(2) AVAILABILITY; AMOUNTS IN ADDITION TO OTHER AMOUNTS.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under paragraph (1)—

(A) are authorized to remain available until expended; and

(B) shall be in addition to amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated for the purposes described in paragraph (1).

(b) CONSULTATION REQUIRED.—The obligation of funds appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a) or otherwise made available for the purposes described in subsection (a)(1) shall be subject to prior consultation with, and consistent with section 634A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2394-1), the regular notification procedures of—

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

(2) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(c) POLICY GUIDANCE, COORDINATION, AND APPROVAL.—

(1) COORDINATOR.—The Secretary of State shall designate an existing senior official of the Department of State to provide policy guidance, coordination, and approval for the obligation of funds appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a).

(2) ASSISTANT COORDINATOR.—The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall designate an existing senior official of the United States Agency for International Development to assist and consult with the senior official of the Department of State designated pursuant to paragraph (1).

(3) DUTIES.—The senior official of the Department of State designated pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be responsible for—

(A) on an annual basis, the identification of specific strategic priorities for using funds appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a), such as geographic areas of focus or functional categories of programming that funds are to be concentrated within, consistent with the national interests of the United States and the purposes of this section;

(B) the coordination and approval of all programming conducted using such funds, based on an assessment that such programming directly counters the malign influence of the Chinese Communist Party or the Government of the People's Republic of China, including specific activities or policies advanced by the Chinese Communist Party or the Government of the People's Republic of China and entities acting on their behalf globally, pursuant to the strategic objectives of the United States, as established in the 2017 National Security Strategy, the 2018 National Defense Strategy, and other relevant national and regional strategies as appropriate;

(C) ensuring that all programming approved bears a sufficiently direct nexus to such activities of the Chinese Communist Party or the Government of the People's Republic of China described in subsection (d) and adheres to the requirements outlined in subsection (e); and

(D) conducting oversight, monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of all programming conducted using such funds to ensure that it advances United States interests and degrades the ability of the Chinese Communist Party or the Government of the People's Republic of China, to advance activities that align with subsection (d) of this section.

(4) INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—The senior official of the Department of State designated pursuant to paragraph (1) shall, in coordinating and approving programming pursuant to paragraph (2), seek—

(A) to conduct appropriate interagency consultation; and

(B) to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that all approved programming functions in concert with other Federal activities to counter the malign influence of the Chinese Communist Party or the Government of the People's Republic of China.

(d) MALIGN INFLUENCE.—In this section, the term "malign influence", with respect to the Chinese Communist Party or the Government of the People's Republic of China, shall be construed to include acts conducted by the Chinese Communist Party or the Government of the People's Republic of China, or entities acting on their behalf that—

(1) undermine a free and open international order;

(2) advance an alternative, repressive international order that bolsters the Chinese Communist Party's or the Government of the People's Republic of China's hegemonic ambitions and is characterized by coercion and dependency;

(3) undermine the national security or sovereignty of the United States or other countries; or

(4) undermine the economic security of the United States or other countries, including by promoting corruption and advancing coercive economic practices.

(e) COUNTERING MALIGN INFLUENCE.—In this section, countering malign influence through the use of funds appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (a) shall include efforts—

(1) to promote transparency and accountability, and reduce corruption, including in governance structures targeted by the malign influence of the Chinese Communist Party or the Government of the People's Republic of China;