

That is why the U.S. and our allies must remain alert to this pressing threat and work together to counter it. We must also make it easier to deploy more secure and reliable tech and telecom infrastructure.

That is exactly what my bipartisan bill would address. It would require a comprehensive strategy for securing global telecom infrastructure worldwide, crack down on Russian and Chinese malign influence at the ITU, and support greater cooperation with our allies to promote and finance secure networks and trusted vendors.

By taking these measures, we can shore up our critical vulnerabilities and counter our adversaries' strategic technology goals.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, our adversaries believe they can achieve undue influence over international telecom infrastructure and technical standards. This bill would help stop them.

I encourage all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in voting to support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. I yield myself the balance of my time.

In closing, I thank Congresswoman MANNING and Congresswoman YOUNG KIM for leading this bipartisan effort to take on Huawei and other CCP companies. I urge all Members to support H.R. 4741, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from American Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4741.

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.

### PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP ACT

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7159) to bolster United States engagement with the Pacific Islands region, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7159

*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 "Pacific Partnership Act".

#### SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress as follows:

(1) The United States has longstanding and enduring cultural, historic, economic, strategic, and people-to-people connections with the Pacific Islands, based on shared values, cultural histories, common interests, and a commitment to fostering mutual understanding and cooperation.

(2) Successive United States administrations have recognized the critical importance of the Pacific Islands, to the world in

high-level strategic documents, including the—

(A) 2015 National Security Strategy, which first declared the rebalance to Asia and the Pacific, affirmed the United States as a Pacific nation, and paved the way for subsequent United States engagement with the Pacific Islands;

(B) 2017 National Security Strategy, which includes a commitment to "shore up fragile partner states in the Pacific Islands region to reduce their vulnerability to economic fluctuations and natural disasters";

(C) 2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report, which identified the Pacific Islands as "critical to United States strategy because of our shared values, interests, and commitments";

(D) 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report, which recognized the need to engage further with the Pacific Islands on shared security goals; and

(E) 2022 Strategy for Pacific Partnership, which outlined goals and methods for deepening the United States partnerships with Pacific Island nations.

(3) The United States Government should further develop, expand, and support a comprehensive and multifaceted United States policy for the Pacific Islands that—

(A) promotes peace, security, and prosperity for all countries that respects the sovereignty and political independence of all nations;

(B) preserves the Pacific Ocean as a corridor for international maritime economic opportunities and growth and promotes sustainable development;

(C) supports regional efforts to address shared challenges, including by strengthening resilience to natural disasters and stewardship of natural resources; and

(D) strengthens democratic governance and the rule of law, and promotes human rights and the preservation of the region's cultural heritages.

(4) The United States should support the vision, values, and objectives of existing regional multilateral institutions and frameworks, such as the Pacific Islands Forum and the Pacific Community.

(5) The United States should work closely with United States allies and partners with existing relationships and interests in the Pacific Islands, such as Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, and Taiwan, and regional institutions like the Pacific Islands Forum.

#### SEC. 3. STRATEGY FOR PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than January 1, 2026, and again not later than January 1, 2030, the President, in coordination with the Secretary of State, shall develop and submit to the appropriate congressional committees a strategy entitled the "Strategy for Pacific Partnership" (in this section referred to as the "Strategy").

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The Strategy shall include each of the following:

(1) A description of overarching goals for United States engagement in the Pacific Islands region, including United States diplomatic posts, defense posture, and economic engagement.

(2) An assessment of threats and pressures to the Pacific Islands region including those caused by factors such as—

(A) natural disasters;

(B) illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing;

(C) non-United States military presence and activity;

(D) developmental challenges;

(E) economic coercion and corruption; and

(F) other factors assessed to be causing a direct risk to the United States national interests in the Pacific Islands.

(3) A plan to address the threats assessed pursuant to paragraph (2).

(4) An analysis of the needs and goals expressed by governments of the Pacific Islands region, including at or through multilateral institutions, evaluated in light of the United States national interests.

(5) A plan for the resources necessary for the United States to meet its goals in the Pacific Islands region.

(6) Mechanisms, including existing forums, for coordinating and cooperating on shared goals among the following, as appropriate:

(A) the governments of Pacific Island countries;

(B) regional partners in the Pacific Islands region, including multilateral forums and organizations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum;

(C) civil society in the Pacific Islands; and

(D) United States subnational governments in the Pacific.

(c) CONSULTATION.—In developing the Strategy, the President should consult, as appropriate, with—

(1) relevant United States governmental agencies;

(2) regional organizations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum, the Pacific Islands Development Program, the Pacific Community, the Forum Fisheries Agency, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme;

(3) the governments of the countries in the Pacific Islands;

(4) civil society stakeholders;

(5) United States allies and partners; and

(6) United States Pacific territories and States.

#### SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITIES TO THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM.

The provisions of the International Organizations Immunities Act (22 U.S.C. 288 et seq.) may be extended to the Pacific Islands Forum in the same manner, to the same extent, and subject to the same conditions as such provisions may be extended to a public international organization in which the United States participates pursuant to any treaty or under the authority of any Act of Congress authorizing such participation or making an appropriation for such participation.

#### SEC. 5. REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of submission of a strategy detailed in section 3(a), the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees an implementation report—

(1) with a proposed timeline for implementation of the strategy described in section 3(a) of this Act;

(2) detailing the assessed number of full-time equivalent positions and contractors needed to achieve the goals laid out in the strategy described in section 3(a) of this Act;

(3) describing any institutional or structural re-organizations suggested to help carry out the strategy described in section 3(a) of this Act; and

(4) if necessary, identifying additional funding needed to support resource levels to carry out the strategy described in 3(a).

(b) CONSOLIDATION.—A report required by this subsection may be consolidated with any other report required to be submitted by the same Federal official on the same or similar date as the requirement under this subsection.

#### SEC. 6. ALLIES AND PARTNERS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President, in consultation with the Secretary of State, and the relevant heads of other Federal departments and agencies, should consult and coordinate with allies and partners in the Pacific Islands region, including Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Taiwan, and regional institutions, such as the Pacific Islands

Forum, the Pacific Islands Development Program, the Pacific Community and Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, with respect to programs to provide assistance to the Pacific Islands, including for purposes of—

- (1) deconflicting programming;
- (2) ensuring that any programming does not adversely affect the absorptive capacity of the Pacific Islands;
- (3) ensuring complementary programs benefit the Pacific Islands to the maximum extent practicable; and
- (4) ensuring that programming aligns with regional development goals to promote a shared vision for the future of the Pacific Islands.

(b) **FORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS.**—The President should establish a formal consultative process with such regional allies and partners to coordinate with respect to such programs and future-years programming.

#### SEC. 7. REPORTING.

(a) **UPDATES OF CERTAIN REPORTS.**—The Secretary of State, in coordination with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies as appropriate, shall annually update the reports listed in subsection (b) to include within the scope of such reports a regional discussion of transnational crime affecting the Pacific Islands.

(b) **REPORTS LISTED.**—The reports listed in this subsection are the following:

(1) The International Narcotics Control Strategy report required by section 489 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2291h).

(2) The Improving International Fisheries Management report required by section 607 of title VI of the Fisheries Act of 1995 (16 U.S.C. 1826h).

(3) The Trafficking in Persons report submitted under section 110 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7107).

#### SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

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

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

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

(2) **PACIFIC ISLANDS; PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION.**—The term “Pacific Islands” and “Pacific Islands region” mean the nations, territories, and other jurisdictions in the Pacific Ocean within the broad groupings of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from American Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. 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 American Samoa?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7159, the Pacific Partnership Act. I was

proud to be the lead Republican on this bipartisan bill introduced by the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE).

As a grateful and proud Pacific Islander, I remind my colleagues that the United States is a Pacific nation, from the West Coast of the continental U.S., to Hawaii, to American Samoa, to the Northern Mariana Islands, to Guam. The Pacific is critically important to American interests, American values, and to the Americans I have the privilege to represent.

However, in recent years, the Chinese Communist Party has mounted an aggressive campaign to increase its influence among Pacific Island countries. The 2022 security pact between Beijing and the Solomon Islands was seen by many as an alarming wake-up call. The CCP is pressuring island nations to overturn their recognition of Taiwan, illegally fishing in their exclusive economic zones, and bribing local law enforcement to influence local elections.

While Congress has done its job to extend the Compacts of Free Association for another 20 years, those only focus on three Pacific Island countries. There are 11 other countries who need our attention.

The United States has enduring cultural, historic, economic, and people-to-people connections with the Pacific Islands. We just opened up an embassy in Vanuatu, but we must do more.

Pacific Islands are strategically crucial to the United States. For that reason, the Pacific Partnership Act requires the State Department to submit to Congress a Strategy for Pacific Partnership that describes our goals for engaging with the Pacific Islands in the diplomatic, defense, and economic domains. It gives Congress the oversight visibility to ensure that the executive branch formulates and implements a strategy that addresses the many shared threats facing Pacific Island countries.

It also requires that we coordinate and collaborate with our allies and partners, like Australia, Taiwan, Japan, and New Zealand, to ensure that our programs directed toward the Pacific Islands are nonduplicative and complementary. The Pacific Partnership Act will help to better focus the United States' engagement with Pacific Island nations.

Mr. Speaker, I support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 7159, the Pacific Partnership Act, as amended, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that, in this Congress, we have been able to work in a bipartisan manner to strengthen our relationships with the Pacific Islands, from the bipartisan amendments, to the Compacts of Free Association, to the legislation before us today.

These legislative efforts support the leadership of the Biden-Harris administration, which hosted two summits with the Pacific Islands at the White

House, opened new embassies in the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu, and released the first-ever U.S.-Pacific Partnership Strategy.

This legislation would codify that strategy, ensuring that future administrations maintain that focus and provide other authorities to strengthen our outreach to the Pacific Islands and our coordination with allies and partners.

Together, we are affirming a fundamental point: The United States is a Pacific nation. We are determined to deepen and maintain our lasting partnerships with each of the Pacific Islands, and we will do so by listening to and incorporating the principles of what the Pacific Islands have articulated themselves. That collaborative approach is reflected in this bill.

I thank the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE), my good friend, for his leadership and dedication to this critical region. His work on this measure is a testament to our shared commitment to the Pacific and to ensuring that the United States remains a reliable and engaged partner.

Bipartisanship is so important because there is still so much work to be done. Our diplomats, developmental professionals, and Peace Corps volunteers are working tirelessly on the ground.

Can we sustain the resources they need to execute our policy?

Can we follow through on each of the deliverables the United States has promised, including at the Pacific Islands Forum that just concluded at the end of August?

I know each of us here understands the stakes, and I am committed to working with all of my colleagues to ensure that we follow through.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage support for this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE).

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the very kind remarks of my colleague from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING).

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in very strong support of this bill, the Pacific Partnership Act, which aims to broaden and deepen our critical partnerships with our fellow nations of the Pacific.

I first thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from American Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN), and our 24 bipartisan cosponsors, as well as our House Committee on Foreign Affairs, which reported out this bill unanimously.

Our country's Indo-Pacific Strategy states in no uncertain terms that no region is of more consequence to the world and to everyday Americans than the Indo-Pacific. The United States and our allies and partners around the world, who are aligned with an international rules-based order, share the common vision of a free and open Indo-

Pacific, whose governance, priorities, goals, and prosperity are determined by the countries of the Indo-Pacific without manipulation and dominance by malign actors.

This is especially true of the Pacific Islands themselves in the heart of the Pacific, which today face the challenges of increased natural disasters and human and drug trafficking, economic sustainability, threats to democracy, and more.

It is crucial that the United States continue to extend our hand of full partnership in assisting the countries of the Pacific to meet these challenges, as we have for generations.

Our bill, H.R. 7159, advances these goals. It first recognizes that the United States is and has been for two-plus centuries now a Pacific nation and has longstanding and enduring cultural, historic, economic, strategic, and people-to-people connections with the Pacific Islands based on shared values, cultural histories, common interests, and a commitment to fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. It acknowledges that the United States should support the vision, values, and objectives of the Pacific Islands.

This bill requires the President to develop a Strategy for Pacific Partnership that will set the goals for United States' engagement with the Pacific Islands, assess the threats and pressures to the region, and a plan to address such threats, and analyze the needs and goals of the Pacific Islands in the context of the national interests of the United States.

Critically, our bill requires a strategy to be developed in full consultation with the governments of the Pacific Island countries and their multilateral organizations, ensuring that the United States supports the priorities of, by, and for the Pacific itself, and not of other countries who may be pursuing inconsistent priorities.

Our bill also extends diplomatic courtesies and traditional protocols to the Pacific Islands Forum, the primary multilateral organization of the region. The Pacific Islands Forum engages in critical consensus-building work and just held its 53rd Leaders Meeting in Tonga 2 weeks ago in which Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell led the United States delegation.

The extension of such diplomatic courtesies will foster creation of a Pacific Islands Forum mission to the United States, which will strengthen the collective voice of the Pacific internationally in opposition to other attempts to divide and isolate the Pacific Islands, and further expand our relationship and collaboration on strategic matters of mutual interests.

Finally, as has been noted, our bill requires increased collaboration with our partners and allies in the region, including Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and more, ensuring the most efficient and effective use of limited resources and programs. This is critical, as we are much stronger when we do

this important work in coordination with our allies and partners.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the passage of the Pacific Partnership Act.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Pacific Islands are not just our neighbors. They are our partners. The security and prosperity of this region are directly linked to our own. Together, we can ensure that the United States continues to be a leader in promoting peace, security, and prosperity in the Pacific Islands for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me and support this important bill. I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I thank, again, my friend from Hawaii, Mr. CASE, for leading this bill that we introduced together.

The Pacific Partnership Act will help ensure that our area of the world receives the attention it requires in U.S. diplomatic, defense, and economic policymaking.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KEAN of New Jersey). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from American Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7159, 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.

#### STARR-CAMARGO BRIDGE EXPANSION ACT

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1608) to provide for the expansion of the Starr-Camargo Bridge near Rio Grande City, Texas, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1608

*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 "Starr-Camargo Bridge Expansion Act".

#### SEC. 2. STARR-CAMARGO BRIDGE.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The first section of Public Law 87-532 (76 Stat. 153; 130 Stat. 411) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)—

(A) by inserting "and expand" after "construct";

(B) by inserting "including the expansion and addition of adjacent spans to the existing international bridge," after "thereto";

(C) by inserting "multimodal toll" after "14";

(D) by striking "to maintain" and inserting "and to maintain, control,"; and

(E) by striking "such bridge" and inserting "those bridges"; and

(2) in subsection (b), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting "expansion," after "construction,".

(b) RIGHTS OF STARR-CAMARGO BRIDGE COMPANY AND SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS.—Section 3(a) of Public Law 87-532 (76 Stat. 153; 130 Stat. 411) is amended by inserting "as needed for the location, construction, expansion, control, operation, and maintenance of the bridges referred to in subsection (a)(2) at or near Rio Grande City, Texas" after "chapter 466".

(c) SUNSET.—Section 5 of Public Law 87-532 (76 Stat. 153; 130 Stat. 411) is amended—

(1) by inserting "by the Starr-Camargo Bridge Company and its successors and assigns" after "constructed";

(2) by striking "three" and inserting "60";

(3) by striking "five" and inserting "65"; and

(4) by striking "date of enactment of this Act" and inserting "date of enactment of the Starr-Camargo Bridge Expansion Act".

(d) SAVINGS PROVISION.—Nothing in this section or the amendments made by this section—

(1) grants new rights or duties to the San Benito International Bridge Company (known as the "Free Trade International Bridge" as of the date of enactment of this Act); or

(2) alters, repeals, or voids any rights or duties held by the San Benito International Bridge Company (known as the "Free Trade International Bridge" as of the date of enactment of this Act) under Public Law 87-532 (76 Stat. 153; 130 Stat. 411), as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from American Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from American Samoa.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. 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 this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support for S. 1608, the Starr-Camargo Bridge Expansion Act, introduced by Senator CORNYN from Texas and passed unanimously by the Senate.

The development of critical infrastructure is vital for maintaining the smooth flow of goods and services. The Starr-Camargo International Bridge, a privately-owned toll bridge on the U.S.-Mexico border, serves as a crucial link spanning the Rio Grande. It connects Rio Grande City in Texas with Camargo in Mexico. This bridge is a significant commercial transit point, facilitating many hundreds of millions of dollars in trade every year.