

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.

Expanding this bridge will enhance international trade and help to reduce costs for American families by improving the flow of goods. The planned upgrades will ease commercial traffic and help address supply chain issues.

The proposed legislation will allow the bridge's private owners to finance the expansion and improvements through toll revenue without the use of taxpayer funds. Because it is an international port of entry, expanding the bridge requires statutory changes, which have been carefully reviewed and approved by the State Department, the Department of Transportation, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

As mentioned earlier, the Senate passed this measure with unanimous, bipartisan support. A House side companion bill was adopted by the House Foreign Affairs Committee by a unanimous bipartisan vote of 46-0.

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

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 1608, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, Mexico is the top U.S. trading partner with bilateral commercial activity totaling more than \$750 billion last year and accounting for more than 15 percent of total United States trade. These figures represent an investment in the American people and the Mexican economy.

In fact, U.S. companies directly invested \$130.3 billion into Mexico in 2022, and nearly 5 million U.S. jobs depend on trade with Mexico.

That is why I support S. 1608, which will allow for the expansion of the Starr-Camargo Bridge. The existing bridge supports the economic well-being of so many in south Texas and U.S. businesses that rely on the bridge as a critical entry point for import-export into the United States. The expansion of the bridge connecting the United States and Mexico will support more resilient supply chains and address blockages caused by outdated infrastructure and traffic.

It is invaluable to local growers and producers on both sides of the border as they move vegetables, fruit, and other needed products to market.

I understand that the project is also designed to include toll booths, the fees of which will help pay for the cost of upkeep and maintenance.

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

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

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

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina for yielding. I thank her staff also for the hard work and long hours they have been putting in. I thank also my good friend from American Samoa and her staff for getting this bill to the floor.

This bill allows the Starr-Camargo Bridge, a privately-owned toll bridge between Texas and Mexico, to expand and become multimodal. This bridge's previous authorization for construction expired, so we are coming back for an extension to make sure that we pursue the planned expansion project and also add a rail bridge addition.

The planned expansion will ease congestion, reduce truck idling at the port of entry, and alleviate the supply chain issues as the gentlewoman from North Carolina just mentioned a few minutes ago.

This expansion will be paid by tolls, so no cost to the taxpayers. This bridge will serve as the vital trade link between the United States and Mexico.

Keep in mind that the trade between the U.S. and Mexico has been tremendous. In fact, just last year, the trade between the U.S. and Mexico, our number one trading partner, reached \$798.9 billion. I say that in the next 4 or 5 years, the trade between the U.S. and Mexico will increase to a trillion dollars of trade.

If you look at it right now, every minute you have \$1.4 million of trade between the U.S. and Mexico.

What does that mean? That means jobs, not only for the ranchers, not only for industries, not only on this side, but also on the Mexican side so people will stay over there and work over there on the other side.

This trade is important for farmers, for ranchers, for manufacturers, and producers. This bridge is not only important to south Texas, my district, but it is also important for the whole Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank not only my good friend from American Samoa and her staff, but also my good friend the gentlewoman from North Carolina and her staff, for their work.

Mr. Speaker, I also thank Senator JOHN CORNYN for his leadership and Senator CRUZ for getting this bill on the floor. I thank Chairman MCCAUL, Ranking Member MEEKS, and my good friend from San Antonio, Congressman CASTRO, for working to get this bill on the floor. I look forward to getting the President to sign this bill so we can continue creating jobs on both sides of the Rio Grande.

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

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

I support this strong measure, which has strong bipartisan support. This bill will allow for the expansion of the Starr-Camargo Bridge, which will greatly benefit our supply chain capacity with our largest trading partner, Mexico. This is an investment in the American people and the U.S.-Mexican economy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important bill. I thank my colleague, my good friend, Mr. CUELLAR, for his work on this, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, allowing for the expansion of the Starr-Camargo Bridge at no cost to Federal taxpayers will make a real difference in the lives of American families, especially in Texas. I urge all Members to support S. 1608, 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, S. 1608.

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.

GLOBAL ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7089) to authorize the Diplomatic Security Services of the Department of State to investigate allegations of violations of conduct constituting offenses under chapter 77 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7089

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 "Global Anti-Human Trafficking Enhancement Act".

SEC. 2. EXPANDING PROTECTION AND PROSECUTION EFFORTS AT THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

(a) INVESTIGATION AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of State is authorized to investigate transnational violations of chapter 77 of title 18, United States Code, in which part of the offense conduct occurred outside the United States or involved 1 or more foreign nationals.

(b) AUTHORITIES.—Section 37(a)(1) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 2709(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking “; or” and inserting a semicolon;

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following new subparagraph:

“(C) transnational violations of chapter 77 of title 18, United States Code, in which any part of the offense conduct occurred outside the United States or involved one or more foreign nationals; or”.

SEC. 3. REPORT.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for six years, the Secretary of State shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report that includes each of the following:

(1) The number of relevant cases opened and investigated by the Diplomatic Security Service as a result of the additional authorities granted by the amendments made by this Act.

(2) The percentage of the cases opened and investigated by the Diplomatic Security