

training to Department of Homeland Security existing employees with the goal of training existing personnel to fill cybersecurity job vacancies at the Department.

According to testimony before the Homeland Security Committee in June, there are nearly 2,000 cybersecurity vacancies at DHS today.

With cybersecurity threats from adversaries like Russia and China only further increasing, filling these vacancies is a national security imperative.

While DHS has taken important steps to address this challenge, private-sector competition for talent and the slow Federal hiring process have continued to hamper our efforts at DHS to eliminate this shortfall.

Training existing DHS personnel who have already been vetted and onboarded by the Department is a critical part of ensuring that DHS has the cybersecurity talent on payroll today to fulfill its critical cybersecurity mission.

This legislation builds on CISA's existing Federal Cyber Defense Skilling Academy and ensures that CISA continues its efforts to leverage cybersecurity expertise to support DHS' broader workforce.

I urge my colleagues to continue Congresswoman Jackson Lee's legacy on this most important issue and support H.R. 3208.

Across DHS' many component agencies, there is a critical need for cybersecurity expertise to help defend our homeland.

So long as key cybersecurity positions sit vacant, we are at greater risk for damaging cyberattacks that expose our sensitive information or disrupt critical infrastructure.

Passing Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee's legislation will ensure DHS employees get the training necessary to fill cybersecurity job vacancies, and also, we will be honoring her legacy of fighting for a stronger cybersecurity workforce.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3208, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I, again, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3208, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3208.

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. GREEN of Tennessee. 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.

DHS JOINT TASK FORCES REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2024

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 4698) to authorize the Joint Task Forces of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 4698

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 "DHS Joint Task Forces Reauthorization Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 708 OF THE HOMELAND SECURITY ACT OF 2002.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 708(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 348(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (9)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) in clause (ii), by striking "and" at the end;

(ii) in clause (iii)(II), by adding "and" at the end; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

"(iv) a staffing plan for each Joint Task Force;" and

(B) by amending subparagraph (C) to read as follows:

"(C) not later than December 23, 2024, and annually thereafter, submit to the committees specified in subparagraph (B) a report containing information regarding—

"(i) the progress in implementing the outcome-based and other appropriate performance metrics established pursuant to subparagraph (A)(iii);

"(ii) the staffing plan developed for each Joint Task Force pursuant to subparagraph (A)(iv); and

"(iii) any modification to the mission, strategic goals, and objectives of each Joint Task Force, and a description of, and rationale for, any such modifications;" and

(2) in paragraph (13), by striking "2024" and inserting "2026".

(b) ANNUAL BRIEFING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall brief—

(A) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives; and

(D) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

(2) TOPICS.—Each briefing required under paragraph (1) shall cover the latest staffing and resource assessment at Joint Task Force-East, including—

(A)(i) a determination of whether the current staffing levels of Joint Task Force-East are sufficient to successfully advance the mission, strategic goals, and objectives of such Joint Task Force; and

(ii) if such determination reveals insufficient staffing levels, the cost, timeline, and strategy for increasing such staffing levels; and

(B)(i) a determination of whether sufficient resources are being provided for Joint Task Force-East in accordance with section 708(b)(7)(a) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 348(b)(7)(a)); and

(ii) if such determination reveals insufficient resource levels, the cost, timeline, and strategy for providing any remaining resource requirements.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on S. 4698.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of S. 4698, the DHS Joint Task Forces Reauthorization Act of 2024, which extends authorization for DHS' Joint Task Force authority until September 30, 2026.

This critical authority allows DHS to use multiagency task forces to defend U.S. borders against terrorism and other emerging threats in a unity of effort campaign.

□ 1700

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS) for his leadership on the House companion to this legislation, H.R. 9460, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are considering the DHS Joint Task Force Reauthorization Act of 2024.

Right now, DHS operates one joint task force in the southeastern U.S. and Caribbean called Joint Task Force East. Every day, Joint Task Force East combines the efforts of the U.S. Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, Homeland Security Investigations, and other agencies to share intelligence and counter bad actors who may bring negative elements to our Nation.

This joint task force also works hand in hand with the Department of Defense and our international partners. We must ensure that they continue to detect and dismantle cartels across the world.

Just this calendar year alone, coalition efforts under Joint Task Force East have resulted in the interdiction of hundreds of migrants, over 55,000 kilos of illicit cocaine valued at almost \$2 billion, illegally harvested fish valued at over \$900,000, over 350 illegal firearms, and over 26,000 rounds of ammunition.

Again, that is nearly \$2 billion worth of illegal narcotics that have been kept off our American streets and over 350 guns not going into the hands of cartels or gang members around the world.

For the joint task force's work to continue, we need to reauthorize the joint task force authority. At the same time, Congress needs more information

on the resources the joint task force needs to be successful.

This bill reauthorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security's ability to create and use joint task forces while also requiring DHS to set up a staffing plan and share that information with Congress.

With this legislation, we can support the men and women working to protect the homeland and give them the resources that they need to do their job of keeping the American people safe.

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

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS).

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 4698, the DHS Joint Task Forces Reauthorization Act of 2024. I am proud to lead the House companion to this bill.

This bipartisan and bicameral legislation will extend the Department of Homeland Security's joint task force authority for another 2 years.

Extending this authority allows for a unified DHS law enforcement approach to target, dismantle, and disrupt transnational criminal organizations and their illegal activities. This coordination enables personnel from Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the U.S. Coast Guard, and others to continue integrating their existing authorities to work together to confront complex national security threats that impact our Nation's land, sea, and air borders, and to combat terrorism, unlawful immigration, maritime mass migration, and illicit smuggling.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 4698.

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

In closing, I thank my colleagues Mr. HIGGINS from Louisiana and Mr. SUOZZI from New York for leading this bill in this House, and my colleagues from both sides of the aisle on Homeland Security for their support. I would also like to thank Senator PETERS for leading this bill in the Senate.

During my own travels this year, I saw the great work that Joint Task Force East conducts on a day-to-day basis. This reauthorization makes sure that their good work continues.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 4698, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Again, I urge my colleagues to support S. 4698, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 4698.

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.

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2024

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3764) to extend and authorize annual appropriations for the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom through fiscal year 2026.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3764

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 "United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Reauthorization Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 207(a) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6435(a)) is amended by striking "2023 and 2024" and inserting "2025 and 2026".

(b) EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION.—Section 209 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6436) is amended by striking "September 30, 2024" and inserting "September 30, 2026".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from American Samoa (Mrs. RADEWAGEN) and the gentleman 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 to 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, religious persecution is a tragic reality in many parts of the world, whether it be against Uyghur Muslims in China, Christian minorities in parts of Africa and the Middle East, the Baha'i in Iran, or religious communities attempting to worship without official control by repressive regimes in Burma, China, or North Korea. Anti-Semitism is on the rise.

This bipartisan bill, which unanimously passed the Senate, will continue the good work of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, or USCIRF.

Congress created USCIRF as an independent Federal entity in 1998. Although the fundamental freedom of re-

ligion was under siege around the world, it did not receive enough attention in U.S. foreign policy.

USCIRF is a body of experts who speak out on behalf of persecuted believers of any faith and push for accountability beyond what the State Department or the White House may view as diplomatically comfortable.

The commission's independent voice remains critical today, as the State Department too often pushes religious freedom to the side.

Although the law requires the department to designate countries of particular concern for religious freedom violations, their list of CPC countries never includes all the countries that meet the statutory criteria.

Thankfully, USCIRF continues its truth telling to identify the other persecutors that should be designated. Those countries include Vietnam, where Communist authorities severely repress Christians, Buddhists, and other believers who attempt to worship outside of state control. They also include Nigeria, where Islamist militias murder Christians with impunity.

They include Afghanistan, where the brutal Taliban have retaken power and moved that country back to an intolerant darkness. If any countries are countries of particular concern for serious violations of religious freedom, then those should be among them.

S. 3764 is a simple extension of USCIRF's statutory authority so that the commission can continue its bipartisan, nonsectarian work on behalf of our Nation's first freedom, religious liberty.

I am very pleased that this is a clean reauthorization and does not include any of the previous attempts by some in the other body to make USCIRF more partisan or to dilute its mandate with extraneous issues.

Through robust oversight, we also must work to ensure that USCIRF remains focused on its true, bipartisan statutory mandate; namely, "the annual and ongoing review of the facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom."

I thank Senator RUBIO and his bipartisan colleagues who introduced this bill in the Senate where it received unanimous support.

I also recognize the important work of the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Global Human Rights Subcommittee, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who is the author of the House side reauthorization. He has been a leader on religious freedom issues throughout his 43-year career in this House.

We need to pass this bill immediately to help ensure that freedom of religion under threat from extremists and authoritarian governments around the world remains front and center.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 3764, and I thank our Senate colleagues, especially Senators MARCO