

the Trump administration did not appoint a Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights Issues, which the North Korean Human Rights Act mandates. Congress must ensure that does not happen again.

This bill will enable thorough legislative oversight of the administration's North Korea policy, including by requiring the administration to answer to Congress should it fail to appoint a Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights Issues in an expedient fashion.

H.R. 3012 would also provide the incoming administration with the tools necessary to elevate the cause of human rights in North Korea while extending reporting requirements that will allow Congress to ensure that the United States does not ignore Pyongyang's brutal treatment of its own citizens.

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

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM), the chair of the Subcommittee on the Indo-Pacific.

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative MOYLAN for yielding and for his leadership as well as my good friend Representative MANNING for moving this bill forward.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my bipartisan bill, H.R. 3012, the North Korean Human Rights Reauthorization Act.

This bill updates the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 that was enacted to provide humanitarian aid to North Korean refugees, allow for information access for the North Korean people, and appoint a U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues.

H.R. 3012 reauthorizes, streamlines, and strengthens oversight of these programs through 2028 and calls for Korean-American families to be reunited with their immediate relatives in North Korea.

We need someone at the State Department dedicated entirely to North Korean human rights issues, especially as Kim Jong Un's brutality against his own people grows. Why?

Because North Korean women and children face the most inhumane treatment in the world, child labor is institutionalized in North Korea, and women are forced into sex trafficking organized by government officials and human traffickers; because an estimated 100,000 North Koreans are subject to forced labor in factories with inhumane conditions in the People's Republic of China; and because torture, forced disappearances, imprisonment, forced sterilization, and religious persecution are tools regularly used to consolidate the North Korean regime's power.

From January 2017 to December 2022, the special envoy position was vacant; that is nearly 6 years. If the position is ever vacant again for more than 180 days, my bill requires the State De-

partment to report on ongoing efforts to fill the position.

The authorization for the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 lapsed in 2022. We must get this legislation signed into law this Congress. We cannot ignore the threat posed by North Korea, and holding the North Korean regime accountable without supporting human rights is a nonstarter.

Failing to reauthorize this landmark human rights initiative sends a signal to Kim Jong Un that the United States will allow human rights abuses in North Korea and around the world to fall on deaf ears.

I thank Representative AMI BERA for co-leading this bill with me, and I thank our chairman of the full committee and his staff for their leadership and commitment to human rights and freedoms for the North Korean people.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 3012.

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

We must be just as committed today to supporting the human rights of North Koreans as we were in 2004, which is why I support this bipartisan reauthorization of the North Korean Human Rights Act through 2028.

While much of U.S. policy toward North Korea is focused on its nuclear and missile programs, we cannot ignore the gross human rights abuses within the country. We can and must address both.

I thank Representatives KIM and BERA for shining a light on the struggle of the North Korean people. I hope my colleagues will join me and support this important bill.

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

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

In closing, I thank Representatives KIM and BERA of California for working together on this important legislation that reinforces the United States' commitment to promoting human rights in North Korea.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Guam (Mr. MOYLAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3012, 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. MOYLAN. 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.

AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY OF STATE TO DESIGNATE ADDITIONAL PERSONS ELIGIBLE TO SERVE AS PASSPORT ACCEPTANCE AGENTS

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8234) to authorize the Secretary of State to designate additional persons eligible to serve as passport acceptance agents, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8234

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY OF STATE TO DESIGNATE ADDITIONAL PERSONS ELIGIBLE TO SERVE AS PASSPORT ACCEPTANCE AGENTS.

Section 6109(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 (22 U.S.C. 213a(b)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (6) as paragraph (7); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (5) the following:

“(6) A United States citizen who, as determined by the Secretary, is employed by and provides services through a reputable, established company or institution and is commissioned or appointed as a notary or notary public or otherwise authorized to perform a notarization under the laws of a State, district, or territorial government.”.

SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENTS RELATING TO HAND-CARRY COURIER SERVICES FOR PASSPORT APPLICATIONS AND PASSPORTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall take such actions as may be necessary to—

(1) facilitate an increase in the number of companies certified to provide hand-carry courier services; and

(2) increase the daily maximum number of applications for United States regular passports, by service type, that such companies may submit to a passport agency of the Department of State (commonly referred to as “meeting slots”) as part of the hand-carry courier services of such company.

(b) HAND-CARRY COURIER SERVICE DEFINED.—In this section, the term “hand-carry courier service” means—

(1) the transport of applications for United States passports to a passport agency of the Department of State for processing; and

(2) the retrieval of newly issued United States passports for delivery, directly or indirectly, to the passport holder.

SEC. 3. DATE OF EXPIRATION OF UNITED STATES PASSPORTS.

The Secretary of State shall take such actions as may be necessary to provide that each United States regular passport issued or renewed on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act expires on the same month and day of the month as the date of birth of the individual associated with such passport.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. MOYLAN) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Guam.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MOYLAN. 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 gentleman from Guam?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, millions of Americans use U.S. passports as their official travel documents each year. Passports are what open doors to faraway foreign destinations.

The problem, though, is that certain Americans are having a difficult time applying for them. What should be a simple administrative step is anything but.

That is where my colleague Mr. MAST's bill comes in. H.R. 8234 would level the playing field, assisting those Americans who currently face unnecessary obstacles.

First, the bill would authorize new institutions to serve as passport acceptance agents. Passport acceptance is the process of verifying the applicant's identification documents.

Currently, most civilian passport acceptance is done by designated employees of the U.S. Postal Service. With the recent closure of many U.S. post offices and with fewer post offices offering passport services, however, access points for passport acceptance have been significantly reduced. This reduction has led to delays in some citizens' ability to schedule a passport appointment.

We feel this acutely on Capitol Hill. Scarcely a day goes by when Members of Congress like myself do not hear from frustrated constituents experiencing some sort of passport problem.

□ 1230

Allowing new entities, like public notaries, to become passport acceptance agents will ensure that the citizen application process is easier, faster, and more seamless. For example, if the notaries at all UPS Stores and AAA Travel offices nationwide were to become registered passport acceptance agents, then the number of passport acceptance sites would increase by 10,000 locations.

The second thing this bill would do is assist Americans in rural areas and nonmajor cities apply for their passports. The so-called hand-carry courier program helps citizens who otherwise would be unable to travel to a passport agency due to time, cost, or distance constraints. Through the program, they would be able to secure an urgent or emergency passport using a third-party registered agent.

H.R. 8234 would allow for more companies to participate in the hand-carry program. By expanding the program, we make emergency passports more readily available to citizens who need them, especially for those who don't live in or near a major city.

Finally, Mr. MAST's bill would align a passport's expiration date with the

applicant's birthday, making it easier for him or her to remember when it is time to renew. This will help reduce the application spikes surrounding popular travel seasons and prevent new backlogs and delays.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join in supporting H.R. 8234, which is an important step in making passport services more accessible and more reliable, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in strong support of H.R. 8234. As the world has reopened following the COVID-19 pandemic, demand for passports last year skyrocketed, leading to significant delays. Under Secretary of State Antony Blinken's leadership and the tireless efforts of consular officials, the State Department successfully tackled this backlog and restored processing times to prepandemic levels. Moreover, this administration has partnered closely with Congress to advance modernization of the Department's consular processing to be better prepared to handle future surges in demand.

The provisions in H.R. 8234 aim to further strengthen our passport processing infrastructure, particularly to help ensure that all Americans, especially those in rural or remote areas, have reasonably convenient access to passport services. This includes permissive authorities for the Department of State to better enable applicants to utilize private couriers, access passport acceptance agents, and remember to renew their passports before expiry. These provisions can help those in underserved communities who may not have a passport acceptance facility nearby.

There is no single solution to the challenges in providing passport and visa services at a sustained and high level, and the Department's efforts must be driven not by the preferences of courier companies or potential new acceptance agents but by the Americans who need passports.

We must work together and in a smart way to ensure the State Department has the authorities and resources it needs to carry out its mission securely and efficiently with respect to passport processing, and H.R. 8234 can help provide additional practical tools, where and as necessary, to improve service delivery and meet the needs of American travelers.

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

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST), who is the chair of the Oversight and Accountability Subcommittee.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues for their work and support on H.R. 8234.

It is a bill to reduce the passport barriers that American travelers face with just a few commonsense solutions to

help make it a more seamless process for Americans and a more intuitive process for when their passport might expire. It would help prevent the emergency situations that all of us as Members of Congress face for our constituents to get the passports they need.

Getting a passport, for many, is the closest that Americans will get to seeing the work of our State Department, and when they see delays and backlogs, that shakes their confidence in what they believe the State Department and many of our other institutions can do.

The backlog is especially troublesome for our citizens who live in rural areas without easy access to the few passport agencies or centers that we have around the country.

If the State Department can't get those small things done right now in a timely fashion and competent way, then it is hard to convince the American people that the State Department can handle bigger things—except a passport is not a small thing for most people, most families, and most individuals. For our constituents, that is a business trip, family vacation, wedding, or, God forbid, funeral.

We urgently need reforms to address the passport backlog and prevent any future backlog from occurring.

H.R. 8234 enhances U.S. passport applicants' customer experience in three ways that have been mentioned already.

First, it authorizes the Secretary of State to allow qualified notaries to accept and certify the relevant paperwork. Certify doesn't mean that they are issuing a passport. It means they are identifying that all the t's have been crossed, the i's have been dotted, and the blanks are filled in so that the application doesn't get kicked back by the State Department.

Currently, citizens who live in rural areas need to mail in their paperwork or try to get to a certain employee in a place like the post office. They have few or inconsistent hours to actually go see those individuals, and it delays their application process. By expanding the number of people who can accept and certify the paperwork to include these qualified notaries, we greatly expand the options for Americans who do not live near these passport acceptance centers.

Second, my bill requires the State Department to devote more resources to nontraditional applicants—again, often from rural areas—who utilize private courier services for emergency passport services. Since 2007, the number of slots these private courier services have to process Americans' applications has decreased, while the number of Americans who live at least 250 miles away from a passport acceptance office has substantially increased over that same period of time.

These services are an effective alternative for Americans who need urgent passports and don't live near those offices, and expanding these resources will help serve the citizens by adjusting to population migration patterns

that we have seen over the last two decades.

Finally, my bill would make it easier for Americans to remember to renew their passports by changing the passport expiration dates to coincide with their birthdays, just like most of us do with our driver's licenses. This simple change in awareness will make it so that many people remember to renew their passports early instead of realizing it at the last second because it is not on an intuitive date, which leads to the surges in applicants in the system and creates those backlogs.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues for their work on this legislation, and I urge adoption of this bill.

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

The Department of State's passport application processing has shown welcomed improvement. The bipartisan provisions in this bill would help them make even more progress and connect more Americans to a U.S. passport.

By helping the State Department increase access and meet higher demand, I hope we can prove that the government can adapt and work faster.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill, and I hope we can advance further measures to support consular services in a bipartisan fashion, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, we need to make passport services more accessible to Americans who don't live in major cities. This bill, H.R. 8234, would actually do that by authorizing new actors like public notaries to serve as passport acceptance agents.

It would also allow more companies to participate in the hand-carry courier program and open up slots for those companies at passport agency offices across the country.

Americans who don't live in major cities shouldn't have to have a harder time getting travel documents than anyone else.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Guam (Mr. MOYLAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 8234, 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.

COORDINATOR FOR AFGHAN RELOCATION EFFORTS AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2024

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8368) to establish a Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts in the

Department of State, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8368

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 "Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts Authorization Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF COORDINATOR.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of State shall appoint a Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts ("Coordinator"), who shall be responsible for—

(1) relocating and resettling eligible Afghan allies and facilitating the departure of United States citizens and lawful permanent residents who request United States assistance to leave Afghanistan, except that the Coordinator shall prioritize the facilitation of such departures before the relocation or resettlement of allies; and

(2) working with other offices of the Department of State, as well as with appropriate counterparts at other Federal departments and agencies, to ensure integrated United States support for such relocation efforts.

(b) AUTHORITIES.—The Coordinator is authorized—

(1) to enter into personal services contracts for a period ending not later than the date described in section 3;

(2) to extend and maintain through such date personal services contracts entered into pursuant to the authority provided by section 2401 of the Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117-43);

(3) to hire temporary personnel who are United States citizens, except that to the extent possible the Coordinator should use Foreign Service limited appointments to fill such positions both in the United States and abroad in accordance with section 309 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 3949); and

(4) subject to the availability of appropriations—

(A) to accept, in the form of reimbursement or transfer, amounts from other Federal departments or agencies as appropriate to carry out the duties described in subsection (a); and

(B) to reimburse such other departments or agencies as the Coordinator may determine appropriate to carry out such duties.

(c) DETAILEES AND ASSIGNEES.—Any Federal Government employee may be detailed or assigned to the Office of the Coordinator, with or without reimbursement, consistent with applicable laws and regulations regarding such employee, and such detail or assignment shall be without interruption or loss of status or privilege.

(d) NOTIFICATION WITH RESPECT TO TRANSFERS OF FUNDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Coordinator shall notify the appropriate congressional committees of each use of the transfer authority made available under subsection (b)(4)(A) not later than 15 days before the completion of such transfer.

(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—In this subsection, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

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

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

SEC. 3. SUNSET.

This Act and the authorities provided by this Act shall terminate on the date that is

3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. MOYLAN) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Guam.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members 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 gentleman from Guam?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bipartisan legislation to codify the establishment of the Office of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts.

When the Biden administration executed its disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, we left behind thousands of Afghans who had risked their lives to assist the United States' mission in Afghanistan.

The subsequent Taliban takeover put these brave individuals at serious risk, and we have seen many Afghans who worked for the U.S. be targeted in reprisal killings and forced disappearances. It is our duty as Americans to help bring these vulnerable Afghans to safety in the U.S.

The Office of the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts has worked tirelessly in 2021 to support the resettlement of eligible Afghans in the United States. After undergoing the most thorough security vetting processes, CARE assists Afghans as they complete the final stages of the resettlement process, preparing them for their new lives in the United States.

At a time when there is little hope for Afghans to pursue a life of prosperity amidst the brutal Taliban regime's crackdown on human rights and archaic restrictions on women, it is more important than ever that the U.S. fulfill our duty to our Afghan allies and help them come to the United States.

I have been happy to see that CARE has demonstrated increased efficiency in processing Afghan relocation cases, enabling our vetted Afghan partners to come to the United States.

Codifying this office ensures that every eligible, properly vetted Afghan may be moved to the U.S. and establish a new, safe life for their family far from the threat of the Taliban.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to show their support for our Afghan allies and support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1245

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