

The Action for Dental Health Act will reauthorize State oral health workforce improvement programs. These programs seek to enhance dental workforce planning and development through the support of innovative programs that meet the individual needs of each funded State.

I hope my colleagues will join me in this effort to strengthen and expand access to oral healthcare. I encourage all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 3843, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON), a dentist who is a Member of the House, chairman of the subcommittee on the Appropriations Committee, and my good friend.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Kentucky for yielding, and I thank both the gentleman from Kentucky and the gentlewoman from Washington for bringing this bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3843, the bipartisan reauthorization of the Action for Dental Health Act of 2023.

First, I thank my colleague from Illinois, Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY, for her continued leadership on this issue. I was proud to partner with her in 2018 when the Action for Dental Health Act first passed, and I am pleased to see the House of Representatives working again in a bipartisan fashion to consider the reauthorization of the Action for Dental Health Act.

Since its implementation, the Action for Dental Health Act has improved dental care in communities across the United States, strengthened the dental safety net, and brought disease prevention and education into underserved communities.

This reauthorization is an essential step in continuing to address barriers to oral healthcare services that still exist, like tackling the oral health workforce issues and reducing the number of adults and children living with untreated dental disease.

As a former dentist in Blackfoot, Idaho, I know that the more we can provide patients with an early diagnosis, the better off our patients and our oral healthcare system will be.

As co-chair of the Congressional Oral Health Caucus, I am proud to, once again, join Congresswoman KELLY in this effort, and I encourage my colleagues to vote "yes" on this critical reauthorization so we can continue the work to decrease dental health disparities in communities where better access to care is most needed.

Ms. SCHRIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY).

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for considering the Action for Dental Health Act that I am proud to co-lead with Representative MIKE SIMPSON.

The Action for Dental Health Act was the first bill I passed when I ar-

rived in Congress, and I am honored to see the continuing support for this important piece of legislation.

Oral healthcare is a critical part of our overall health, and preventive dental care can reduce costs for families and helps so many people live better lives.

Oral disease is a common risk factor with chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases and diabetes. Oral health affects our ability to eat, speak, and show emotions. It plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's self-esteem, academic performance, and attendance at work or school.

Furthermore, many studies have shown a connection between poor oral health and increased mortality risk, showing that preventative oral healthcare not only enhances quality of life but also plays a pivotal role in promoting longevity and reducing mortality risk.

Additionally, oral health is an important part of perinatal health. Reducing bacteria in a woman's mouth during pregnancy can significantly reduce her risk of developing oral diseases and spreading decay-causing bacteria to her baby. Moreover, some evidence suggests that women with periodontal disease during pregnancy could be at greater risk for poor birth outcomes, such as preeclampsia, preterm birth, and low birthweight.

Regular preventive dental care is essential for good oral health, so one can find problems earlier when they are easier to treat and have better outcomes. Unfortunately, many don't get the care they need. More people are unable to afford dental care than other types of healthcare. Vulnerable populations, including children, low-income communities, minorities, and the elderly are particularly susceptible to experiencing limited access to dental care, leading to poorer oral health outcomes.

We must address the barriers to oral healthcare services. By prioritizing early diagnosis, intervention, and preventive dental treatments, we can significantly improve the well-being of patients and alleviate strain on our healthcare system.

I am proud the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee, as well as the full committee, has recognized the urgent need to address this pressing challenge for so many Americans.

The Action for Dental Health Act passed the Health Subcommittee and the full Energy and Commerce Committee with unanimous, bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I speak now as a pediatrician. In addition to limiting children's consumption of sweet drinks and frequent snacking on carbohydrates, to

providing fluoride for all of our patients, we absolutely need to expand the oral healthcare workforce to provide dental care for our patients.

I encourage my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 3843, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, in closing, this is an important piece of legislation. I thank my friends for bringing this forward. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3843, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3843.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. GUTHRIE. 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.

ASSESSMENT OF TRANS-ATLANTIC SUBMARINE FIBER OPTIC CABLE

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3385) to direct the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to submit to Congress a report containing an assessment of the value, cost, and feasibility of developing a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the contiguous United States, the United States Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3385

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

SECTION 1. ASSESSMENT OF TRANS-ATLANTIC SUBMARINE FIBER OPTIC CABLE.

(a) *REPORT.*—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies as necessary, shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing an assessment of the value, cost, and feasibility of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the contiguous United States, the United States Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria, to enhance the national security of the United States.

(b) *ELEMENTS.*—The report required by subsection (a) shall include an assessment of—

(1) the digital security, national security, and economic opportunities associated with a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable described in subsection (a);

(2) the lifespan of submarine fiber optic cables currently connecting the United States Virgin Islands to the contiguous United States;

(3) the current security of telecommunications between the contiguous United States and the United States Virgin Islands;

(4) the readiness of telecommunications infrastructure in the United States Virgin Islands to

support a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable described in subsection (a);

(5) the potential for engagement with trusted entities in the deployment of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable described in subsection (a), and the associated geopolitical and economic advantages;

(6) the potential connectivity opportunities to maximize investments in the United States economy through the use of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable described in subsection (a);

(7) the value, cost, and feasibility of establishing a data center and high-security cloud services facility, with independent power generation, in the United States Virgin Islands for communications of the United States Africa Command, communications of the United States Special Operations Command, and national security communications;

(8) the state of submarine fiber optic cables connected to United States telecommunications infrastructure; and

(9) any other related matters the Secretary determines are appropriate.

(c) **NO MANDATORY DATA COLLECTION.**—The Secretary may not require any entity to provide data for purposes of preparing the report required by subsection (a).

(d) **FORM.**—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form without any designation relating to dissemination control, but may include a classified annex.

(e) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **NOT TRUSTED.**—The term “not trusted” means, with respect to an entity, that the entity is determined by the Secretary to pose an unacceptable risk to the national security of the United States, or the security and safety of United States persons, based solely on one or more determination described under paragraphs (1) through (4) of section 2(c) of the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019 (47 U.S.C. 1601(c)).

(2) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(3) **TRUSTED.**—The term “trusted” means, with respect to an entity, that the Secretary has not determined that the entity is not trusted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) and the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. SCHRIER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LATTA. 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 in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3385. This bill would direct the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to assess the value, cost, and feasibility of developing a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the United States, the Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria.

A trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable could provide national security benefits to the United States,

making this an important issue to study.

I thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands and the gentleman from Idaho's First District for leading on this important legislation. I also thank the ranking member of the full committee, the gentleman from New Jersey, for his willingness to work with Republicans on this legislation in a bipartisan way through regular order in the committee process.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3385, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3385, a bill requiring the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the NTIA, to assess the value, cost, and feasibility of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the United States, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria, and to submit a report to Congress with its findings.

The bill also directs the NTIA to report to Congress on the current state of telecommunications connecting the U.S. Virgin Islands and the United States, including an assessment of the lifespan and security of the telecommunications infrastructure linking the two.

This assessment and report will provide the Energy and Commerce Committee with vital information on the strength and resiliency of communications infrastructure in the U.S. Virgin Islands. It will help us determine whether the American interests can be served by connecting the United States and the African Continent with undersea cable infrastructure by way of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

H.R. 3385 is a critical step to enhance American communications security and competitiveness around the world. In recent years, the United States and many allies have recognized the threat posed by untrusted Chinese telecommunications equipment to our own national security.

Thanks to the work of the Energy and Commerce Committee and our colleagues, we have taken steps to remove suspect equipment from the American communications networks to protect against attacks or sabotage by our adversaries, but this work is not finished because network security does not end at the water's edge.

For decades, China and other adversaries have spent considerable time and money to deploy suspect telecommunications equipment and infrastructure across the African Continent. The assessment required in this bill is an important step to understanding the cost of securing the connection between the United States and our African allies, and how best to ensure a critical global communications channel is protected from the prying eyes of our adversaries.

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Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms.

PLASKETT) for her leadership of this bill and the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. FULCHER) for his partnership in this effort.

This legislation is critical to enhancing our Nation's national security and the security of communications between the United States and our African partners. I look forward to reviewing the results of NTIA's assessment when it becomes available.

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

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

Ms. SCHRIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT), and I thank her for her leadership.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Washington for the opportunity to speak on this matter, and I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for really digging into this information and recognizing the potential national security interests as you heard outlined by them both.

There are hundreds of undersea fiber optic telecommunications cables linking North America with Europe, South America, and a myriad of locations in Asia, but not a single undersea fiber optic telecommunications cable connects North America with the entire African Continent.

The DiasporaLink Act represents an opportunity to establish a high-speed, secure telecommunications data connection to Africa and from American soil facilitating deepened economic connections and aiding American regional security assistance. This link will allow America to establish a direct digital presence on the continent to capitalize on emerging economic opportunities, as well as to protect our Nation against cyber and military threats that may come from the African Continent.

The landing points of Lagos, Nigeria, and Accra, Ghana, have been selected as part of the study on the continent as landing points for the cables. These coastal cities are hubs for several undersea cables that connect West African nations to Europe and South America. Additionally, the strategically located American Embassies at these landing points provide additional security for us.

There are two other nations which have been proliferating throughout the African Continent at this time. Both of those are our adversaries, and it is incredibly important that we establish our own telecommunications internet undersea cable to the continent.

The first one, which is China, has a proliferation of Chinese telecommunications and military investments which is profound and growing. The Chinese multinational Huawei has constructed roughly 70 percent of Africa's information technology infrastructure. China continues to make similar investments in the Caribbean through its

Belt and Road Initiative. No less than 10 nations have signed agreements of various kinds to open their nations up to Chinese influence.

Russia, as well, has developed a multipolar world order. Its deployment of disinformation and its use of mercenaries have undermined democratic stability and driven conflict on the continent of Africa. Moscow's increasing ambitions to position itself as an ally to African countries and stoke anti-Western sentiment has assisted to turn the continent into a flash point in the global strategic competition between Russia and the West.

Russia's support of authoritarian governments, including its backing of a string of coups in recent years, is undermining the continent's democratic aspirations. Meanwhile, the involvement of Russia's Wagner Group is driving conflict, worsening human rights abuses, and spurring growing militarization in governance: Nigeria in 2023, Mali in 2022, Sudan in 2021, Guinea in 2023, Burkina Faso in 2024, all coups in the last few years with tremendous influence by Russia and China in that.

The undersea cable linking the American East Coast and Africa via the United States Virgin Islands would serve as both a national security instrument and a digital commerce expressway to boost America's global political, economic, and military advantages. Such undersea cable development would facilitate similar links that could be developed in the U.S. Virgin Islands which already has links between the Virgin Islands, South America, and the mainland United States.

We also need to be clear about the minerals that are in Africa that are being extracted continually by both Russia and China. Niger is the world's seventh largest producer of uranium. The Ministry of Mines says that Mali has one of the largest deposits of gold, and lithium, as well; cobalt in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Sudan, which also has tremendous minerals; and Burkina Faso with bauxite and phosphate. These are things being exploited by our adversaries on the continent, which we must have our own dedicated interest in.

The DiasporaLink Act is an opportunity to assure that the United States can continue its work countering the proliferation of Chinese influence in the global telecommunications space. The use of the U.S. Virgin Islands, which not only has those cables, but also has a National Guard installation on the island of St. Croix with a nearby military support airport could expand and support that interest, as well.

I thank the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee for reviewing this at the subcommittee level, having it go through the committee process, the regular order process that this House so desperately wants, and after working together, it unanimously coming out of committee here to the floor.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this measure for the interest not only

of our country but for the democracy in the African Continent, as well.

Ms. SCHRIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close. I just want to emphasize that H.R. 3385 is a matter of national security. I thank Representative PLASKETT for painting such a clear picture of that risk. For that reason, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, again to highlight, H.R. 3385, as stated in the bill, the report shall include an assessment of the digital security, the national security, and the economic opportunities associated with a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable. This is again essential for our security.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 3385, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCCORMICK). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3385, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to direct the Secretary of Commerce to submit to Congress a report containing an assessment of the value, cost, and feasibility of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the contiguous United States, the United States Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENERGY EMERGENCY LEADERSHIP ACT

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3277) to amend the Department of Energy Organization Act with respect to functions assigned to Assistant Secretaries, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3277

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 "Energy Emergency Leadership Act".

SEC. 2. FUNCTIONS ASSIGNED TO ASSISTANT SECRETARIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 203 of the Department of Energy Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7133(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(12) Energy emergency and energy security functions, including—

"(A) responsibilities with respect to infrastructure, cybersecurity, emerging threats, supply, and emergency planning, coordination, response, and restoration; and

"(B) upon request of a State, local, or tribal government or energy sector entity, and in consultation with other Federal agencies as appropriate, provision of technical assist-

ance, support, and response capabilities with respect to energy security threats, risks, and incidents."

(b) COORDINATION.—The Secretary of Energy shall ensure that the functions of the Secretary described in section 203(a)(12) of the Department of Energy Organization Act (as added by this Act) are performed in coordination with relevant Federal agencies.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN) and the gentleman from Washington (Ms. SCHRIER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DUNCAN. 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 in the RECORD on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3277, the Energy Emergency Leadership Act. Sponsored by Representatives WALBERG and BLUNT ROCHESTER, H.R. 3277 has strong bipartisan support, passing out of the Energy and Commerce Committee 48-0 last May.

The bill is necessary to strengthen the Department of Energy's important energy emergency mission. It does so by requiring that the well-established energy emergency and cybersecurity functions at the DOE are organized under the leadership of an Assistant Secretary confirmed by the Senate.

This bill amends the Department of Energy Organization Act to establish in law this Assistant Secretary level of leadership at the Department of Energy's emergency response and cybersecurity functions.

This bill will ensure the Department has focused and accountable leadership to protect the public more fully from fuel and electricity supply disruptions against natural or manmade hazards, including emerging threats from our foreign adversaries to the Nation's electric grid.

Under this legislation, the DOE will carry out its responsibilities in coordination with other agencies with improved coordination across the Department, better interagency collaborations, and greater accountability to the United States Congress.

Establishing accountable leadership of this DOE mission is an important step in the face of increased threats, vulnerabilities, and interdependencies of energy infrastructure and end-use systems.

Protecting energy security requires defense in depth. This means a strong energy sector, strong State capabilities, and ensuring sector agencies like the Department of Energy have the tools that they need to respond to energy emergencies.

A vote for H.R. 3277 is a vote for ensuring accountable DOE leadership