

Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.): *Provided*, That such amount is designated by the Congress as being for an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

SA 3299. Mr. SCHUMER (for Mr. HAGERTY) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 91, to award a Congressional Gold Medal collectively to 60 diplomats, in recognition of their bravery and heroism during the Holocaust; as follows:

Amend the title to read as follows: “To award a Congressional Gold Medal collectively to 60 diplomats, in recognition of their bravery and heroism during the Holocaust.”.

SA 3300. Mr. SCHUMER (for Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. GRAHAM)) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 805, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the murder of James Wright Foley and calling for the moral courage to prioritize the return of Americans held captive abroad and take all necessary efforts to deter international hostage taking and arbitrary detention; as follows:

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following: “That the Senate—

(1) stands with all those who have been taken hostage or wrongfully detained, those who have been released, and the families and friends who fight for their freedom;

(2) prioritizes the return of all innocent United States nationals targeted for kidnapping or wrongful detention abroad and will continue to take all necessary steps to secure the release of Americans and deter our adversaries from using Americans as tools for their geopolitical ambitions;

(3) acknowledges the need to continue working with allies and partners to develop a coordinated approach to deter and prevent international hostage-taking;

(4) condemns the practice of targeting and wrongfully detaining Americans in order to threaten American sovereignty and interfere with United States foreign policy;

(5) supports efforts to ensure that the United States Government hostage enterprise is properly resourced and authorized to address the evolving dynamic of hostage-taking and wrongful detention, including through the Hostage Response Group at the National Security Council, the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell, the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, and supporting departments and agencies to speed the safe return of United States nationals held hostage abroad and deter future hostage-taking;

(6) commends the personnel, past and present, of the hostage enterprise who have endeavored to faithfully execute the mission of recovering Americans unjustly held captive abroad; and

(7) recognizes August 19, 2014, as a solemn remembrance of this national security threat and the United States Government's sacred obligation to protect United States nationals abroad from being taken captive unjustly.

SA 3301. Mr. SCHUMER (for Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. GRAHAM)) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 805, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the murder of James Wright Foley and calling for the moral courage to prioritize the return of Americans held captive abroad and

take all necessary efforts to deter international hostage taking and arbitrary detention; as follows:

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas James W. Foley was an American freelance journalist, an author, teacher and humanitarian from New Hampshire;

Whereas James dedicated his career to robust, independent, and compassionate journalism that took him to war zones and classrooms alike;

Whereas, upon his return after being detained for six weeks in Libya, James said, “for some reason I have physical courage, but, that's nothing compared to moral courage. If I don't have the moral courage to challenge authority, to write about things that might have reprisals on my career, if I don't have that moral courage, we don't have journalism”;

Whereas, on November 22, 2012, James was kidnapped while reporting on the conflict in northern Syria;

Whereas, on August 19, 2014, James Wright Foley was publicly beheaded by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), his death then used as propaganda against the United States of America;

Whereas, on September 4, 2014, the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation was established to inspire the moral courage needed to secure the freedom of Americans taken captive abroad, prevent future hostage-taking, and promote journalist safety;

Whereas the Foley Foundation participated in the National Counter Terrorism Center task force, ordered by President Barack Obama to evaluate United States hostage policy and engagement with families of those held captive;

Whereas, on June 24, 2015, President Obama issued Presidential Policy Directive 30, which committed to “achieving the safe and rapid recovery of U.S. nationals taken hostage outside the United States” and established the current United States hostage enterprise, which includes the Hostage Response Group (HRG) at the National Security Council, the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs (SPEHA), and the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell (HRFC) that together pursue recovery strategies, support returned hostages and families of current hostages, and coordinate the use of diplomatic, law enforcement, intelligence, and military capabilities to resolve international hostage-takings;

Whereas the Foley Foundation has worked since 2014, in collaboration with the United States Government's hostage enterprise and families of United States nationals taken hostage abroad by terrorists or criminals and those wrongfully detained by nation states to help reunite families;

Whereas, in 2019, after negotiating the release of a United States citizen wrongfully detained in Iran, President Trump reiterated that “the highest priority of the United States is the safety and well-being of its citizens. Freeing Americans held captive is of vital importance to my Administration, and we will continue to work hard to bring home all our citizens wrongfully held captive overseas,” and in 2023, upon negotiating the release of five Americans held in Iran, President Biden said that “reuniting wrongfully detained Americans with their loved ones has been a priority for my Administration since day one”;

Whereas, since 2019, the Foley Foundation has annually published research in the “Bringing Americans Home” report, which evaluates the experiences of American families with a loved one held captive abroad, returned hostages and detainees, and government and nongovernment experts;

Whereas, in December 2020, Congress passed, and President Trump reaffirmed the United States commitment to bringing home American citizens by signing into law the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act (22 U.S.C. 1741 et seq.) to prioritize and provide assistance to Americans wrongfully detained abroad and to their family members;

Whereas, in September 2021, Alexandra Kotey pleaded guilty to eight counts of kidnapping, torture, and accessory to murder of four Americans, including James Wright Foley, Kayla Jean Mueller, Steven Joel Sotloff, and Peter Edward Kassig;

Whereas, on August 19, 2022, the Department of Justice convicted former British jihadist, El Shafee ElSheik in Federal Court in the Eastern District of Virginia for the kidnapping, torture, and murder of Americans Sotloff, Kassig, Mueller, and Foley, as well as three British citizens;

Whereas, under Democratic and Republican presidents, the United States has successfully freed more than 120 Americans from unjust captivity abroad;

Whereas President Joe Biden's July 2022 Executive Order 14078 (relating to bolstering efforts to bring hostages and wrongfully detained United States nationals home) declared that hostage taking and the wrongful detention of United States nationals constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States; and

Whereas the targeting of United States nationals for use as political pawns by nation states is a grave threat to the security of United States nationals traveling abroad, seeks to hold the United State Government hostage, and strains international stability: Now, therefore, be it

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I have nine requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session

of the Senate on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Subcommittee on Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Growth of the Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 91

AMENDMENT NO. 3299

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding passage of S. 91, as amended, the Hagerty amendment to the title at the desk be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 3299) to the title was agreed to as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the title)

Amend the title to read as follows: "To award a Congressional Gold Medal collectively to 60 diplomats, in recognition of their bravery and heroism during the Holocaust."

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the senior Senator from Colorado and the majority leader be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills and joint resolutions from September 25, 2024, through September 27, 2024.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENTS AUTHORITY

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the upcoming adjournment of the Senate, the President of the Senate, the President pro tempore, and the majority and mi-

nority leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences, or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses, or by order of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces, on behalf of the Majority Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 107-12, the reappointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Review Board: Trevor Whipple of Vermont.

The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, and in consultation with the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, pursuant to Public Law 103-296, reappoints the following individual as a member of the Social Security Advisory Board: Robert Charles Joondeph of Oregon.

The Chair announces, on behalf of the Majority Leader and the Republican Leader, pursuant to Public Law 110-298, the appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the State and Local Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery Board: Juan Figueroa of New York.

The Chair, on behalf of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, pursuant to Public Law 117-263, announces the appointment of the following individual to serve as member of the Commission on Reform and Modernization of the Department of State: Jay Snyder of New York.

RURAL BROADBAND PROTECTION ACT OF 2024

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 473, S. 275.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 275) to require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a vetting process for prospective applicants for high-cost universal service program funding.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation with an amendment to strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic as follows:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Rural Broadband Protection Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. VETTING PROCESS FOR PROSPECTIVE HIGH-COST UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND APPLICANTS.

Section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(m) VETTING OF HIGH-COST FUND RECIPIENTS.—

"(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

"(A) the term 'covered funding' means any new offer of high-cost universal service program funding, including funding provided through a reverse competitive bidding mechanism provided under this section, for the deployment of a broadband-capable network and the provision of supported services over the network; and

"(B) the term 'new covered funding award' means an award of covered funding that is made based on an application submitted to the Commission on or after the date on which rules are promulgated under paragraph (2).

"(2) COMMISSION RULEMAKING.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Commission shall initiate a rulemaking proceeding to establish a vetting process for applicants for, and other recipients of, a new covered funding award.

"(3) CONTENTS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—In promulgating rules under paragraph (2), the Commission shall provide that, consistent with principles of technology neutrality, the Commission will only award covered funding to applicants that can demonstrate that they meet the qualifications in subparagraph (B).

"(B) QUALIFICATIONS DESCRIBED.—An applicant for a new covered funding award shall include in the initial application a proposal containing sufficient detail and documentation for the Commission to ascertain that the applicant possesses the technical, financial, and operational capabilities, and has a reasonable business plan, to deploy the proposed network and deliver services with the relevant performance characteristics and requirements defined by the Commission and as pledged by the applicant.

"(C) EVALUATION OF PROPOSAL.—The Commission shall evaluate a proposal described in subparagraph (B) against—

"(i) reasonable and well-established technical, financial, and operational standards, including the technical standards adopted by the Commission in orders of the Commission relating to Establishing the Digital Opportunity Data Collection (WC Docket No. 19-195) (or orders of the Commission relating to modernizing any successor collection) for purposes of entities that must report broadband availability coverage; and

"(ii) the applicant's history of complying with requirements in Commission and other government broadband deployment funding programs.

"(D) PENALTIES FOR PRE-AUTHORIZATION DEFAULTS.—In adopting rules for any new covered funding award, the Commission shall set a penalty for pre-authorization defaults of at least \$9,000 per violation and may not limit the base forfeiture to an amount less than 30 percent of the applicant's total support, unless the Commission demonstrates the need for lower penalties in a particular instance."

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment, in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 275), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.