To require a publicly available list of all employers that relocate a call center overseas and to make such companies ineligible for Federal grants or guaranteed loans and to require disclosure of the physical location of business agents engaging in customer service communications.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

December 7, 2011

Mr. Bishop of New York (for himself, Mr. McKinley, Mr. Michaud, and Mr. Gene Green of Texas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, Armed Services, and Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

A BILL

To require a publicly available list of all employers that relocate a call center overseas and to make such companies ineligible for Federal grants or guaranteed loans and to require disclosure of the physical location of business agents engaging in customer service communications.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “The United States Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

As used in this Act—

(1) the term “agency” means a Federal or State executive agency and a military department;

(2) the term “business entity” means any organization, corporation, trust, partnership, sole proprietorship, unincorporated association, or venture established to make a profit, in whole or in part, by purposefully availing itself of the privilege of conducting commerce in the United States;

(3) the term “call center” means a facility or other operation whereby employees receive incoming telephone calls, emails, or other electronic communication for the purpose of providing customer assistance or other service;

(4) the term “consumer” means any individual within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States who purchases, transacts, or contracts for the purchase or transaction of any goods, merchandise, or services, not for resale in the ordinary course of the individual’s trade or business, but for the individual’s use or that of a member of the individual’s household;
(5) the term “customer service communication” means any telecommunication or wire communication between a consumer and a business entity in furtherance of commerce;

(6) the term “employer” means any business enterprise that employs in a call center—

(A) 50 or more employees, excluding part-time employees; or

(B) 50 or more employees who in the aggregate work at least 1,500 hours per week (exclusive of hours of overtime);

(7) the term “part-time employee” means an employee who is employed for an average of fewer than 20 hours per week or who has been employed for fewer than 6 of the 12 months preceding the date on which notice is required;

(8) the terms “relocating” and “relocation” refer to the closure of a call center, or the cessation of operations of a call center, or 1 or more facilities or operating units within a call center comprising at least 30 percent of the call center’s, or operating unit’s, total volume when measured against the previous 12-month average call volume of operations or substantially similar operations to a location outside of the United States;
(9) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Labor;

(10) the term “telecommunication” means the transmission, between or among points specified by the communicator, of information of the communicator’s choosing, without change in the form or content of the information as sent and received; and

(11) the term “wire communication” or “communication by wire” means the transmission of writing, signs, signals, pictures, and sounds of all kinds by aid of wire, cable, or other like connection between the points of origin and reception of such transmission, including all instrumentalities, facilities, apparatus, and services (among other things, the receipt, forwarding, and delivery of communications) incidental to such transmission.

SEC. 3. LIST OF CALL CENTERS RELOCATING OVERSEAS AND INELIGIBILITY FOR GRANTS OR GUARANTEED LOANS.

(a) List.—

(1) Notice requirement.—

(A) In general.—Not fewer than 120 days before relocating a call center to a location outside of the United States, an employer shall notify the Secretary of such relocation.
(B) **Penalty.**—A person who violates sub-
paragraph (A) shall be subject to a civil penalty
not to exceed $10,000 for each day of violation.

(2) **List.**—The Secretary shall maintain and
make publicly available a list of all employers that
relocate a call center, and such employers shall re-
main on the list for a period not to exceed 3 years
after each instance of relocating a call center.

(b) **Ineligibility for Grants or Guaranteed
Loans.**—

(1) **Ineligibility.**—Except as provided in sub-
section (b) and notwithstanding any other provision
of law, an employer that appears on the list de-
scribed in section 3(b) shall be ineligible for any di-
rect or indirect Federal grants or Federal guaran-
teed loans for 5 years after the date such employer
was added to the list.

(2) **Exceptions.**—The Secretary, in consulta-
tion with the appropriate agency providing a loan or
grant, may waive the eligibility restriction provided
under subsection (a) if the employer applying for
such loan or grant demonstrates that a lack of such
loan or grant would—

(A) threaten national security;
(B) result in substantial job loss in the United States; or

(C) harm the environment.

e) Preference in Federal Contracting for Not Relocating a Call Center Overseas.—The head of an agency, when awarding a civilian or defense-related contract, shall give preference to a United States employer that does not appear on the list described in section 3(b).

d) Effective Date.—This section shall take effect 1 year after its enactment.

SEC. 4. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION RELATED TO FEDERAL BENEFITS FOR WORKERS.

No provision of section 3 shall be construed to permit withholding or denial of payments, compensation, or benefits under any Federal law (including Federal unemployment compensation, disability payments, or worker retraining or readjustment funds) to workers employed by employers that relocate operations outside the United States.

SEC. 5. REQUIRED DISCLOSURE BY BUSINESS ENTITIES ENGAGED IN CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMUNICATIONS OF PHYSICAL LOCATION.

(a) In General.—Except as provided in subsection (b), a business entity that either initiates or receives a cus-
customer service communication shall require that each of its
employees or agents participating in the communication
disclose their physical location at the beginning of each
customer service communication so initiated or received.

(b) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) Business entities located in the United States.—The requirements of subsection (a) shall not apply to a customer service communication involving a business entity if all of the employees or agents of the business entity participating in such communication are physically located in the United States.

(2) Communication initiated by consumer knowingly to foreign entity or address.—The requirements of subsection (a) shall not apply to an employee or agent of a business entity participating in a customer service communication with a consumer if—

(A) the customer service communication was initiated by the consumer;

(B) the employee or agent is physically located outside the United States; and

(C) the consumer knows or reasonably should know that the employee or agent is physically located outside the United States.
(3) Emergency Services.—The requirements of subsection (a) shall not apply to a customer service communication relating to the provision of emergency services (as defined by the Federal Trade Commission).

(4) Business Entities and Customer Service Communications Excluded by Federal Trade Commission.—The Federal Trade Commission may exclude certain classes or types of business entities or customer service communications from the requirements of subsection (a) if the Commission finds exceptionally compelling circumstances that justify such exclusion.

(e) Transfer to U.S.-Based Customer Service Center.—A business entity that is subject to the requirements of subsection (a) shall, at the request of a customer, transfer the customer to a customer service agent who is physically located in the United States.

(d) Certification Requirement.—Each year, each business entity that participates in a customer service communication shall certify to the Federal Trade Commission that it has complied or failed to comply with the requirements of subsection (a) and (e).

(e) Regulations.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Federal Trade Com-
mission shall promulgate such regulations as may be nec-
essary to carry out the provisions of this section.

(f) **Effective Date.**—The requirements of sub-
section (a) shall apply with respect to customer service
communications occurring on or after the date that is 1
year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

**SEC. 6. ENFORCEMENT.**

(a) **In General.**—Any failure to comply with the
provisions of section 5 shall be treated as a violation of
a regulation under section 18(a)(1)(B) of the Federal
Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 57a(a)(1)(B)) regard-
ing unfair or deceptive acts or practices.

(b) **Powers of Federal Trade Commission.**—

(1) **In General.**—The Federal Trade Commiss-
ion shall prevent any person from violating section
5 and any regulation promulgated thereunder, in the
same manner, by the same means, and with the
same jurisdiction, powers, and duties as though all
applicable terms and provisions of the Federal Trade
Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.) were incor-
porated into and made a part of this Act.

(2) **Penalties.**—Any person who violates regu-
lations promulgated under section 5 shall be subject
to the penalties and entitled to the privileges and
immunities provided in the Federal Trade Commis-
sion Act in the same manner, by the same means, and with the same jurisdiction, power, and duties as though all applicable terms and provisions of the Federal Trade Commission Act were incorporated into and made part of this Act.

(c) Authority Preserved.—Nothing in this section or section 5 shall be construed to limit the authority of the Federal Trade Commission under any other provision of law.