Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3144. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, together we send a strong message that we should not have buy-in from the air carriers, airport operators, labor unions, passengers, groups, airport vendors, and tech.

Mr. Speaker, in 2012, then-TSA Administrator John Pistole unilaterally made changes to the prohibited items list. However, I believe TSA should consult the Aviation Security Advisory Committee, or ASAC, before implementing new security protocols.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3144 also includes language to ensure that there is continuity in the ASAC’s operations even when there are changes to its membership. Given that the ASAC of our Nation’s critical infrastructure is owned and operated by the private sector, it is important that DHS maintain close partnerships with the private sector to execute its missions and programs.

When it comes to aviation security, such partners are essential insofar as TSA cannot effectively carry out its mission at our Nation’s airports without buy-in from the air carriers, airport operators and other stakeholders. It is important that we address issues and vulnerabilities that affect the Nation’s aviation sector.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that this bill was approved unanimously in committee and thank our cosponsors; the chairman of our committee’s Subcommittee on Transportation Security, Mr. KATKO; the chairman of the full committee, Mr. McCaul; and the ranking member of the full committee; Mr. Thompson. I am pleased that the committee has worked in a bipartisan fashion to advance this timely piece of legislation.

Together we send a strong message to TSA and the American flying public about our commitment to ensuring that sensible and effective security policies are in place at our Nation’s airports. For these reasons, I urge Members to support H.R. 3144.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.
Mr. Speaker, electromagnetic pulse, or EMP, can be catalyzed by non-nuclear intentional electromagnetic interference, a major solar storm, or a high-altitude nuclear blast. EMP is an invisible force of ionized particles with the potential to overwhelm and destroy our present electrical power grids, which are a vital component of nearly every other critical infrastructure we have.

Reducing America’s vulnerability to naturally occurring or weaponized electromagnetic pulse is a timely and critical security priority. During the past several decades, America has spent billions of dollars hardening many of our critical defense assets, including our nuclear triad and our missile defense components, against natural or weaponized electromagnetic pulse.

However, the Department of Defense relies upon the largely unprotected civilian grid for 99 percent of its electricity needs in the continental United States, without which it cannot affect its mission.

Twelve years ago, in August of 2003, an electromagnetic pulse knocked out a large portion of the electric grid across the eastern United States. Fifty million people were affected after 21 power plants shut down in just 3 minutes. Office workers streamed into parking lots and many commuters were stranded inside their trains.

In a matter of minutes, the things that make up our critical infrastructure, from the electric grid to water pumps, to cell phone service, to computer systems, were disrupted. Lives suddenly changed that day in New York City, Cleveland, Detroit, and all the way into Canada. In New York City alone, this short blackout was estimated to cost more than a half billion dollars.

There are at least 11 major government reports now that have all come essentially to the same conclusion regarding our vulnerabilities to electromagnetic pulse. Some of America’s most enlightened national security experts, as well as many of our enemies, of potential enemies, consider a well-executed weaponized electromagnetic pulse against America to be a “kill shot”—let me say that again—a “kill shot” to America.

However, our civilian grid remains fundamentally unprotected against severe EMP, and for it to remain so is an open invitation to our enemies to exploit this dangerous vulnerability.

Indeed, the National Intelligence University recently translated an Italian military doctrine called “Passive Defense.” This doctrine stresses that electrical grids are vital to the national existence of major powers in the...
world like America. It includes a formula for calculating the value of electrical power plants and for prioritizing the targeting of electric grid components and other critical infrastructures. Mr. Speaker, this Iranian military doctrine referenced the use of nuclear-generated electromagnetic pulse as an effective weapon against America.

Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, we are here today to pass the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act, which, if signed into law, will represent the first time in history that Congress will be specifically addressing this dangerous threat of electromagnetic pulse.

This legislation will enhance the DHS threat assessments for EMP through research and reporting requirements. It will help the United States prevent and prepare for such an event by including large-scale blackouts into our critical existing national planning scenarios, including educational awareness for first responders to protect critical infrastructure. Most importantly, it requires a specific plan for protecting and recovering the electrical and other critical infrastructure from a dangerous electromagnetic pulse event.

Mr. Speaker, finally, there is a moment in the life of nearly every problem when it is big enough to be seen by reasonable people and still small enough to be addressed. Those of us in this Chamber and across America live in a time when there still may be opportunity for the free world to address and mitigate the vulnerability that naturally occurring or weaponized EMP represents to the mechanisms of our civilization. This is our moment.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the remarks by the gentleman from Arizona in reference to the solidarity in which we stand with the French people. As it has been stated here, this was a wake-up call to all of us that the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism is contemplating the concept of nuclear-generated electromagnetic pulse as an asymmetric weapon against America.

Over the past decade, our Nation has seen an unprecedented expansion in the use of electronics, Mr. Speaker. These electronics have transformed our economy, our homes, our families, and, really, the way we do business and have become an integral part of our daily lives.

Unfortunately, this technology is also susceptible to new types of potential threats, threats that have been talked about on this floor by not only Mr. FRANKS, but also our friend, Mr. CARTER, and others.

Today electromagnetic pulses, known as EMPs, could dramatically disrupt electronic activity and severely damage our electrical grids and everything that stands under those grids. Examples of EMP threats include those generated from a geomagnetic solar flare, from a terrorist short-range missile, cybersecurity attacks, or from a physical assault on a utility or a power plant.

The Critical Infrastructure Protection Act that we are talking about today and that we hope to pass is an important first step towards protecting our Nation from potential catastrophic nationwide blackouts.

I would like to recognize Frank Gaffney, the president and founder of the Center for Security Policy. Frank has provided the leadership not only by meeting with me, but also working with Mr. FRANKS and hundreds of other Members to let us know not only about this important critical infrastructure policy need, but also to make sure that we educate and spread awareness to not only our constituency, but other Members of Congress, regarding the new types of potential threats and occurrences, such as an electromagnetic pulse attack, that could dramatically alter our way of life.

I would also like to recognize, as I have previously done, my dear friend, Arizona Congressman TRENT FRANKS. Mr. FRANKS and I have spoken about this issue for years. We have worked hard with the chairman of Homeland Security, as leadership in this House, to make sure that we accomplish this legislation now.

Ultimately, the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act is simply the first step towards getting the U.S. closer to protecting ourselves from a potentially catastrophic nationwide blackout. It is simply the first step, Mr. Speaker. I know this will begin a national dialogue, a dialogue that needs to take place and has been begun by such leaders as former Speaker Newt Gingrich and former Vice President Dick Cheney.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the House today for taking up this important legislation and for colleagues pay attention to understand this bill, and vote for it because support and passage of H.R. 1073, the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act, is important to the American people and our way of life.

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

In closing, I would like to note that H.R. 1073 puts focus on EMP and GMD preparedness response in a reasonable manner. It does so in a way that does not come at the detriment of preparing for other more likely or more potentially lethal events.

I would also reiterate that there are activities already underway at DHS to improve EMP awareness for an EMP event. For example, it is my understanding that DHS is looking at including EMP as an annex to the Federal Interagency Operational Plans currently in development.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 1073.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1073.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of H.R. 1073, the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act of 2015.

As a senior member of the House Committee on Homeland Security as well as the Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Investigations, I am well aware of the importance of our nation’s critical infrastructure and for this reason I support H.R. 1073.

The bill amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 by adding the definition of “EMP” to mean: (1) an electromagnetic pulse caused by intentional means, including acts of terrorism; and (2) a geomagnetic disturbance caused by solar storms or other naturally occurring phenomena.

Directs DHS to: (1) include in national planning frameworks the threat of EMP events; and (2) conduct outreach to educate owners and operators of critical infrastructure, emergency planners, and emergency response providers of the threat of EMP events.

The bill also directs DHS to conduct research and development to mitigate the consequences of EMP events, including: an objective scientific analysis of the risks to critical infrastructures from a range of EMP events; determination of the critical national security assets and vital civic utilities and infrastructures that are at risk from EMP events; an evaluation of emergency planning and response technologies that would address the findings and recommendations of experts, including those of the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse Attack; an analysis of available technology options to improve the resiliency of critical infrastructure to EMP; and the restoration and recovery capabilities of critical infrastructure under differing levels of damage and disruption from various EMP events.

DHS will make recommendations to Congress on a strategy to protect and prepare the critical infrastructure of the nation against EMP events, and provide biennial updates on the status of developing a defense against EMP strategy.

Electricity and the national electric grid are of vital importance to our national and domestic security interest.

There were 3 strategic imperatives that dives the Federal approach to strengthen critical infrastructure security and resilience: refine and clarify functional relationships across

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

Mr. F RANKS and I have spoken about the targeting of electric grid components and other critical infrastructures from a range of EMP events; the importance of our nation’s critical infrastructure and for this reason I support H.R. 1073.

I would also reiterate that there are activities already underway at DHS to improve EMP awareness for an EMP event. For example, it is my understanding that DHS is looking at including EMP as an annex to the Federal Interagency Operational Plans currently in development.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 1073.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

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DHS will make recommendations to Congress on a strategy to protect and prepare the critical infrastructure of the nation against EMP events, and provide biennial updates on the status of developing a defense against EMP strategy.

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be in the order of the House, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1338) to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on matters relating to the burial of unclaimed remains of veterans in national cemeteries, and for other purposes, as amended.