

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we were all appalled to learn of the rampant schemes of fraudulent benefiting of government funding intended for victims of the disasters. While these crimes are now being prosecuted under existing fraud laws, I believe that the crime warrants specific and enhanced emphasis to put on notice those who would take criminal advantage of the government's need to focus on speed and comprehensive assistance in times of disasters and emergencies. This bill would establish the specific crime of fraud in connection with major disaster or emergency benefits and increases the penalties currently available for such acts.

Recognizing the particular egregiousness of fraud claims surrounding emergencies like Hurricane Katrina, the bill also directs the U.S. Sentencing Commission to increase penalties under the sentencing guidelines for those individuals who would fraudulently seek to benefit from funding intended for victims of natural disasters and Presidentially declared emergencies.

While I generally do not support specific directives to the Sentencing Commission to increase penalties for crimes, I believe this particular category of crime is egregious enough to warrant more punishment than fraud in general, with appropriate considerations for mitigating and aggravating circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I am in favor, as we all are, of seeing increased benefits being made available for victims of disasters such as Hurricane Katrina. Many have lost everything and are now without a permanent home or compensation for their losses. Many are still not able to return to the area. Many still need ongoing assistance.

We can all agree that the limited disaster and emergency benefits that are made available to victims should only go to legitimate victims, not to scam artists or cheats who recognize that humanitarian concerns in the middle of a disaster require a waiver of traditional checks and balances in favor of speed and getting the relief to the suffering victims. Those who cheat and scheme at these times deserve more punishment.

Accordingly, I am supportive of this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

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

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. McCAUL).

Mr. McCAUL of Texas. I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this, and, Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this important piece of legislation that will work to deter fraud in the wake of disasters like Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Disaster assistance fraud is something I have been fighting for quite some time now. I recently held a hearing in the Homeland Security Investigation Subcommittee to uncover the

findings of a 6-month fraud investigation by the GAO. What they found was nothing short of shocking.

The GAO testified before my subcommittee that FEMA disaster assistance after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita was applied for and received by criminals who used deceased individuals' identities, and even a cemetery as an address to receive the emergency funding. Federal investigators also testified that prisoners in jail before the hurricanes were able to receive almost \$11 million from their jail cells by fraudulently applying for the FEMA disaster assistance funds.

The total price tag for the fraud committed after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is not yet known; but GAO investigators have testified that it will, at the very least, be in the billions of dollars. This is an insult to the victims of these natural disasters and an insult to the ultimate victim, the American taxpayer.

Through this investigation, we have referred over 7,000 fraud cases to the Department of Justice Task Force for prosecution, and this legislation will ensure that they receive the harshest penalty for their actions.

It saddens me to think about the gulf coast families that could have used this money to rebuild their homes and their lives. We need to make sure that these disaster victims and the American taxpayer are never robbed like this again. This legislation is a great first step in making that happen, and I strongly urge my colleagues to vote for the Emergency and Disaster Assistance Fraud Penalty Enhancement Act.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4356.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING AND PRAISING THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 367) honoring and praising the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution on the 100th anniversary of being granted its Congressional Charter.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 367

Whereas the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (in this resolution referred to as the "SAR") was founded on April 30, 1889, and chartered by Congress 100 years ago on June 9, 1906;

Whereas the Charter was signed by Theodore Roosevelt, himself a member of the SAR;

Whereas the SAR was conceived as a fraternal and civic society composed of lineal descendants of the men who wintered at Valley Forge, signed the Declaration of Independence, fought in the battles of the American Revolution, served in the Continental Congress, or otherwise supported the cause of American Independence;

Whereas 16 American Presidents have been proud members of the SAR;

Whereas the Charter of National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution describes the objects and purposes of the Society as "... patriotic, historical and educational" and that it is charged with perpetuating the memory of the men who, by their services or sacrifices during the war of the American Revolution, achieved the independence of the American people;

Whereas the Society is also dedicated to inspiring its members and the community at large with a more profound reference for the principles of the Government founded by our forefathers and to encourage historical research about the American Revolution;

Whereas the SAR has a long record of accomplishments in teaching about the Revolutionary War and those who gained our freedom during the War for Independence;

Whereas it is largely through efforts by the SAR in the late 1800s and early 1900s that the National Archives were established to gather the records of the men who fought and provided services during the Revolutionary War;

Whereas the SAR advances its mission through commemorations of battles and events that led to our freedom;

Whereas the SAR devotes a great deal of its time, energy, and resources to working with children so that they might have a better understanding of the history of the United States;

Whereas the SAR is currently working to establish a Center for Advancing America's Heritage adjacent to its national headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky; and

Whereas the SAR's almost 27,000 members are organized in Chapters throughout the 50 States and the District of Columbia and in several countries overseas that helped the American Colonies gain their freedom: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) recognizes the 100th anniversary of the historic Congressional Charter of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution; and

(2) honors and praises the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution on the occasion of its anniversary for its work to perpetuate and honor the memory of the brave men who fought to gain our freedom during the Revolutionary War and for the Society's unfailing devotion to our Nation's youth.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Concurrent Resolution 367 currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 367, honoring and praising the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution on the 100th anniversary of being granted its Congressional Charter.

As the Declaration of Independence states, governments are instituted among men to secure the inalienable rights that the Creator has endowed upon us. Because the bonds of tyranny over the United Colonies were destructive of this end, the United Colonies sought separation from Great Britain and fought to attain their freedom and independence.

The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, or the SAR, was formed by descendants of patriots of the American Revolution who sought a fraternal and civic society to salute those who pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor in America's battle for independence from the British Crown.

Today, we honor the SAR, which was founded on April 30, 1899, and chartered by Congress 100 years ago on June 9, 1906. The SAR is composed of lineal descendants of the men who wintered at Valley Forge, signed the Declaration of Independence, fought in the battles of the American Revolution, served in the Continental Congress, or otherwise supported the cause of American independence.

The SAR is a historic, patriotic, and educational organization. In keeping with its historical mission, the SAR commemorates and provides memorials for the people and events of the American Revolution, helps preserve records relating to the events leading up to and during the revolution, and supports research and presentations related to the history and people of the revolutionary era.

In fulfilling its patriotic mission, the SAR reaffirms the principles upon which our Nation was founded, maintains and extends the institutions of American freedom, provides recognition for public service, and honors, respects, and supports veterans.

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Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution to honor the SAR for its important work to preserve the legacy of these fallen heroes.

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

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 367 honoring and praising the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution on the 100th anniversary of being granted its Congressional Charter.

The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution was chartered by Congress 100 years ago on June 9, 1906. The charter was signed by Theodore Roosevelt, who was a member. The resolution, which is sponsored by the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE), recognizes this anniversary and honors and praises the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution on the occasion of this anniversary for its work to perpetuate and honor the memory of the brave men who fought to gain freedom during the American Revolution and for the society's unflinching devotion to our Nation's youth.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution and urge my colleagues to support it.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 367.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REQUIRING REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS DESIGNATED AS STATE SPONSORS OF TERRORISM TO DISCLOSE TO ATTORNEY GENERAL LOBBYING CONTACTS WITH LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OFFICIALS

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5228) to require representatives of governments designated as State Sponsors of Terrorism to disclose to the Attorney General lobbying contacts with legislative branch officials, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5228

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

SECTION 1. LOBBYING CONTACTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS DESIGNATED AS STATE SPONSORS OF TERRORISM.

The Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended (22 U.S.C. 611 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 4 the following:

“LOBBYING CONTACTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS DESIGNATED AS STATE SPONSORS OF TERRORISM

“SEC. 4A. (a) Every person required to register under the provisions of this Act who is an agent of a foreign principal, in a case in which the foreign principal is a covered foreign principal, and who makes a lobbying contact with a covered legislative branch official shall, not later than 45 days after the date of such contact, provide to the Attorney General a detailed statement of such contact.

“(b) The Secretary of State shall not recognize as accredited a diplomatic or consular

officer of a covered foreign principal unless such officer agrees to provide to the Attorney General a detailed statement of any lobbying contact with a covered legislative branch official not later than 45 days after the date of such contact.

“(c) The Attorney General shall make information relating to a lobbying contact described in subsections (a) and (b) available to the general public in an electronic format not later than 90 days after the date of receipt of the statement concerning such contact.

“(d) For purposes of this section—

“(1) the term ‘covered foreign principal’ means—

“(A) a State Sponsor of Terrorism; or

“(B) the government of, or a political party of, a State Sponsor of Terrorism;

“(2) the term ‘covered legislative branch official’ has the meaning given that term in section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1602);

“(3) the term ‘lobbying contact’ means any oral or written communication (including an electronic communication) with regard to—

“(A) the formulation, modification, or adoption of Federal legislation (including legislative proposals);

“(B) the formulation, modification, or adoption of a Federal rule or regulation, an Executive order, or any other program, policy, or position of the United States Government;

“(C) the administration or execution of a Federal program or policy (including the negotiation, award, or administration of a Federal contract, grant, loan, permit, or license); or

“(D) the nomination or confirmation of a person for a position subject to confirmation by the Senate; and

“(4) the term ‘State Sponsor of Terrorism’ means a country the government of which has been determined by the Secretary of State, for purposes of section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act of 1979, section 620A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, section 40 of the Arms Export Control Act, or other provision of law, is a government that has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. 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 materials on H.R. 5228 currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5228, legislation to enhance lobbying disclosure requirements for lobbyists who represent foreign nations designated as state sponsors of terrorism.

Lobbyists who represent foreign governments must register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, or