

worked for this legislation. I support the bill to amend S. 1716 and urge its adoption.

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

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the distinguished ranking member of the full Committee on Agriculture, Mr. GOODLATTE, for his support of this bill. We have Senate colleagues who we have served with here in this body previously who have already been working hard on this legislation. I am pleased that we have bipartisan agreement on our intention in providing this disaster assistance and certainly acknowledge and agree with the gentleman from Virginia's statements as it relates to future disaster assistance and the importance of further developing the pilot project programs for livestock producers to have adequate coverage for their losses.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1716.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill just adopted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from South Dakota?

There was no objection.

LIBERIA DESIGNATION EXTENSION

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3123) to extend the designation of Liberia under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act so that Liberians can continue to be eligible for temporary protected status under that section.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3123

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF DESIGNATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The designation of Liberia under section 244(b)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1)) is extended through September 30, 2008.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—Subsection (a) shall be applied so as to render eligible for temporary protected status and work authorization, in accordance with subsections (a), (e) and (f) of section 244 of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1254a), an alien who is a national of Liberia (or in the case of an alien having no nationality, is a person who last habitually resided in Libe-

ria) and is otherwise eligible under subsection (c) of such section, if the alien—

(1) was granted such status under the designation of Liberia that is effective until October 1, 2007 (71 Fed. Reg. 55000);

(2) applied for such status under such designation, and such application is still pending; or

(3) is eligible for late initial registration under section 244(c) of such Act and the regulations implementing such section.

(c) REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall publish in the Federal Register procedures for aliens to register for temporary protected status under the extension made by this Act, and to apply for any applicable work authorization or extension of work authorization. Such registration period shall be not less than 60 days long.

(d) EXTENSION OF CURRENT WORK AUTHORIZATIONS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any work authorization provided under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act pursuant to the designation of Liberia that is effective until October 1, 2007, is extended until not earlier than April 1, 2008.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 3123 extends Liberia's current temporary protected status designation, which is due to expire on September 30 of this year, for 1 year.

As many of us know, Liberia was founded by former American slaves with the help of our government. Since 1989, however, the country has been ravaged by two brutal civil wars which have displaced hundreds of thousands of people and destroyed Liberia's economy and infrastructure.

In recognition of these intolerable conditions, the United States for the past 16 years has accorded special protection status to prevent approximately 3,600 Liberians residing in our Nation under temporary protected status from having to be returned to their homeland in the midst of those wars. Recently, the Department of Homeland Security has determined to terminate these temporary protections in light of the fact that Liberia's civil wars have finally ended and in anticipation of the political stability that Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, its newly elected President, will bring.

While there is no question that President Johnson-Sirleaf has put Liberia on the road to recovery, that road will

unfortunately be rather long. Currently, 85 percent of Liberians are unemployed. The country is suffering from severe shortages in electricity and running water. As for medical care, Liberia has only 26, yes, that is only 26, physicians who must serve a population of 3.4 million people.

Recognizing her country's fragile state, President Johnson-Sirleaf has acknowledged that Liberia is unable to accept and absorb the 3,600 Liberian nationals currently residing in the U.S. under TPS. I am sure we all recall President Johnson-Sirleaf's visit and address to this body and our interest in making sure that she succeeds in bringing peace and democracy to her country. Accordingly, we are deeply concerned about the consequences that could result if thousands of Liberians in the United States are forced to return to their homeland before it is ready and able to accept them.

For these reasons, I ask that you join me in supporting H.R. 3123, which simply extends this protection status for 1 year. I should also note that this bipartisan measure is supported by President Johnson-Sirleaf and the Liberian Government.

I would also like to extend a special thanks to Republican Whip ROY BLUNT who, in talking to Democratic Whip JIM CLYBURN last week, agreed that we should proceed in this manner. Mr. BLUNT is a cosponsor of this bipartisan bill, along with the prime sponsors, Representatives KENNEDY and JIM RAMSTAD, Representatives PENCE and TIBERI, myself, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. McCOTTER, TIM WALBERG, JOHN CONYERS, Ms. JACKSON-LEE, and Representative WYNN. So this is a thoroughly bipartisan bill, and I would urge my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Congress has granted the Secretary of Homeland Security the authority to grant temporary refuge to aliens from particular countries under temporary protected status. If there is an ongoing armed conflict in the country and the return of nationals would pose a serious threat to their security, if there has been a natural disaster in the country resulting in a substantial but temporary disruption of living conditions, or if there exists extraordinary temporary conditions in their country that prevent aliens from returning in safety, the Secretary can grant TPS status to the nationals for as long as 18 months. He can later extend the TPS period for additional periods of as long as 18 months.

Nationals of Liberia have been granted TPS because of civil unrest in Liberia; however, that status expires on October 1 of this year. This legislation would direct the Secretary to extend TPS to nationals of Liberia through September 30, 2008. I support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY), the prime author of the legislation.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the gentleman from California, and I want to commend her for her support.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to lead a bipartisan coalition of Members from both sides of the aisle that support the cause of Liberia, and I want to thank and extend my gratitude to them and to all parties for bringing this bill to the floor today.

Minority Leader and Whip BLUNT, Congressman MIKE PENCE, Congressman TIM WALBERG, and my good friend from Minnesota, JIM RAMSTAD, have come together because we all believe in the Liberian-American community.

I would also like to recognize Congressman KEITH ELLISON, a true champion of the Liberian-Americans, for his steadfast support and dedication to this cause, as well as to Chairman CONYERS and again to Chairwoman LOFGREN on the Judiciary Committee for her strong leadership on this issue.

Madam Speaker, as you can hear from this debate, this is an issue where we have had a country that has had a unique history with our Nation. It is a country that was founded by former American slaves. It was a country that was established by this country for those liberated American slaves; and it was a country whose refugees came back here because of a war that was in part fueled by American guns, where we supported former General Taylor and General Doe.

So it is a tragedy that was exacerbated because America supported a civil war that cost the descendants of those American slaves their lives. There was torture and killing that forced those former American slaves' descendants to have to come back to the United States.

Now they are here. They have made their own lives here. And the thought that we would have to force them to go back instead of them making their own decision as to when to go back. I represent a large community of over 17,000 Liberian-Americans. They want to go back to Liberia, but they want to make the decision as to when they go back. They don't want to have to be forced to go back on October 1 because we are forcing them. They have made their lives here. They contribute heavily to our community.

In fact, I have spoken this afternoon to several of my constituents. One woman, Ms. Harris, has never missed a day of work in the 20 years she has been here in this country; another family, the Dennises, who have been here; Mr. and Mrs. Akowala. He has two degrees in engineering and Mrs. Akowala is a registered nurse.

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Both degrees are very important in this country. Both of whom contribute heavily to our economy. Their children were born here. But if they were forced

back and their children are Americans, what happens? They go back to a country where 85 percent of the country is unemployed, where there's little running water, little electricity. Can you imagine what we'd do to that country? It's barely on its feet right now. What do we do? We do not stabilize the country that's getting on its feet. I think we further destabilize it.

Further, I think the best policy for us to help stand up to Liberia is to help and give them the remittances that Americans here in this country, the Liberian Americans here send back every year to Liberia. And that, I think, is a good policy for this country.

For all of these reasons, not the least of which is Ciehanna Stevens. She is married to an Iraqi war veteran hero who's on his fourth tour of duty. He's a citizen of this country. He's a Liberian American, fourth tour of duty serving his country. She will be deported. Imagine, the wife of an Iraqi war hero on his fourth tour of duty to be deported. That, to me, is an outrage. We need to pass this bill for all the Liberian Americans who contributed to our country.

Mr. CANNON. Madam Speaker, I'd like to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG).

Mr. WALBERG. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3123, legislation that would extend by 1 year temporary protective status for all Liberian refugees living in the United States.

I also count it a privilege that this is a bipartisan piece of legislation. I appreciate the efforts of Congressman KENNEDY and others in working on something that is the right thing to do.

Currently, all Liberian refugees living in the United States under temporary protective status have until October of this year, and then they'll be forced to return to Liberia.

As someone who had the privilege, and I say that sincerely, of helping a Liberian refugee start a brand new life in America, living in my home, forcing these Liberians out of our country is the wrong policy.

Liberia has been torn apart by two long civil wars over the past 2 decades, and while civil war finally ceased in 2003, Liberia is still years from developing the infrastructure needed for Liberian refugees to return.

Liberia's path remains very difficult. With an unemployment rate of 85 percent, shortages of running water and, according to the United Nations, a mere 26 physicians practicing medicine in a country of 3.4 million people, Liberia cannot absorb the estimated 3,600 Liberians who would be required to return.

Some of the estimated 3,600 Liberian refugees who are here legally in the United States came to our country when civil war broke out in Liberia in 1991, and they're now raising children born in America.

This legislation addresses an urgent situation faced by Liberian refugees

who have legally come to America, many over 15 years ago, established careers, bought homes, raised American-born children and become valued members of their communities.

One of the unintended consequences of the temporary protective status is it did not foresee that civil wars would continue many years, leaving refugees in America stuck in a state of flux.

The United States Government must allow these law-abiding, hardworking Liberian refugees the chance to not only continue contributing to American society as they do, but also to continue playing a pivotal role in furthering Liberia's recovery from years of strife and turmoil.

This is the right thing to do. It's an opportunity that we have. It's an opportunity for resources to a foreign country that is a friend of ours that costs us very little because they, the refugees, are the ones primarily giving back.

And so I ask, Madam Speaker, that we, as a Congress, roll up our sleeves in this way and support this legislation to give one simple year to remain for this country to move ahead.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, at this time I yield 4 minutes to one of the co-authors of the bill, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN).

Mr. WYNN. Madam Speaker, let me begin by thanking my colleague, Patrick Kennedy, for his leadership on this issue.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3123, the bill which I have cosponsored which would extend the ability of Liberians living in the United States to maintain their temporary protective status designation allowing them to legally remain in the United States, which has become home for many of these Liberians displaced by conflict and civil war in their native country.

Founded by freed American slaves, with a flag and a Constitution based on our own, Liberia has always had a special relationship with the United States. In fact, I used to live in a little community in Warren County, North Carolina, called Liberia.

But Liberia has had a troubled history in the past few decades. From 1989 to 1997, civil war in Liberia has claimed the lives of almost 150,000 people and displaced 850,000 more.

In August of 2003, the U.N. Security Council established a U.N. peace-keeping mission of up to 15,000 soldiers. Although peace has allegedly been restored, these 15,000 troops are still in Liberia today.

Based on the election of Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson in 2005, the Department of Homeland Security decided that conditions in Liberia were such that temporary protective status for Liberians currently living in the United States should end.

This is illogical. Many of the roughly 3,500 Liberians in the United States today on temporary protective status have been living in the United States

since 1991, over 15 years. They own homes, pay taxes and are pillars of the community.

This Saturday I sat with a gentleman who had a 13-year-old daughter. He said, she's never been to Liberia. She only knows America as her home. Many of their children are like this. They've never known any home other than the United States.

That alone would be good reason to grant this extension. But the fact is that Liberia still has 15,000 U.N. peacekeepers stationed there. Less than 2 weeks ago, Liberia's former House Speaker and a former top military commander were charged with treason for attempting to overthrow the Liberian Government in an alleged coup.

The Sirleaf-Johnson administration is performing admirably in rebuilding Liberia's crippled economy. But there are no jobs or homes for returning Liberians.

Many in the Capitol city of Monrovia lack running water or access to electricity, and waterborne illnesses like hepatitis A and typhoid fever are common.

Eighty percent of Liberians are unemployed. The Liberian Government has pleaded for an extension of temporary protective status, saying it is not ready to accept the return of these Liberians.

Unless we pass this bill, we'll make illegal immigrants of those responsible, hardworking, taxpaying Liberians that fled violence and war in Liberia to seek peace and safety in the United States.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this excellent bipartisan bill supporting an extension of temporary protective status for these Liberians.

I urge my colleagues' support for this measure.

Mr. CANNON. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes now to a cosponsor of the legislation, the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, let me thank the gentlelady from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) for her leadership on the Judiciary Committee as a member of the Judiciary Committee and cosponsor of this legislation.

Might I add my appreciation to Mr. KENNEDY for his leadership and the bipartisanship of this bill.

I pay tribute also to the Liberian community in Houston, Texas, and ask my colleagues to recognize the long history of suffering that Liberians experienced under the presidency of Charles Taylor. The horrific and heinous crimes, the mutilation of young children, the using of child soldiers all speak to the importance and the crucialness of extending the temporary protective status for these who are here in this country who fled because

of political persecution and fled because of the atrocities that they would experience.

This is a temporary protective status of individuals who have been in this country working, paying taxes, and raising their children. We've experienced this over the years of the past administration, looking to try to find some way to provide permanent status for these refugees who have fled persecution. We have not done that yet. However, this is a very good step to recognize their contributions to the United States.

I hope that my colleagues, in reflection of the atrocities that Liberia experienced, will recognize that there is a very, very difficult pathway for them to return back to Liberia.

I do, however, want to applaud the leadership of the new president of Liberia and to recognize the work that she has done. But she, too, has admitted that they are making steps, step by step, and the importance of providing the sanctity and safety of the individuals here in the United States is crucial.

I rise to support H.R. 3123, and would ask my colleagues to support it.

And again, I salute the Liberian community for the suffering but yet the contributions they've made to the United States.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to rise in support of H.R. 3123, which addresses the plight of displaced Liberian nationals, a group of people that is of great regional and global importance. H.R. 3123 recognizes the importance of extending the designation of Liberia under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. I thank the gentleman from Rhode Island, Mr. KENNEDY, for excellent work in bringing this legislation forward.

H.R. 3123 extends the designation of Liberian refugees under section 244(b)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act through September 30, 2008 and expands the designation of Liberia under the Immigration and Nationality Act as a country whose nationals are eligible for temporary protected status and work authorization in the United States. In addition, H.R. 3123 sets forth eligibility requirements for Liberian nationals or persons having no nationality whose last habitual residence was Liberia.

Madam Speaker, let us remember that from 1989 to 1996 the Liberian civil war claimed the lives of more than 200,000 Liberians and further displaced a million others into refugee camps in neighboring and distant countries, including our own. The United States and other countries have provided relief to Liberians. By supporting this bill we can show our affection and commitment to people of Liberia.

The United States has a historical connection to all Liberians, but we also have a moral responsibility to end the killings and mass displacement of innocent citizens. The termination of TPS designation of Liberia would place many Liberians that fled to our country for refuge at risk of being returned prematurely.

Madam Speaker, the elimination of TPS designation means that on October 2, 2007, former TPS beneficiaries will return to the same immigration status they maintained be-

fore registering for TPS, or to any other status they may have acquired while registered for Temporary Protection Status. Accordingly, if an individual did not have lawful immigration status at the time of receiving TPS benefits, and did not obtain any other status during the TPS designation period, he or she will revert to being without lawful status. Such individuals are expected to depart the United States on or before October 1, 2007. Those who do not comply with this requirement may be subject to removal.

The Liberian people living in our country deserve better treatment and protection than the current Immigration and Nationality Act can afford. Congress needs to permit the extension of section 244 which enables the people to register for temporary protection status and work authorization.

Let us give the Liberian people the respect and protection they need by supporting H.R. 3123.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, if we allow the temporary protective status for Liberia to expire this September, more than 3,000 Liberians living in the United States will be forced to immediately return to a country that lacks housing, jobs, health care, education, and other necessary services. Such a result would be inhumane to these men and women, but it would also be destabilizing to their country, a country that we want to support in their efforts to achieve peace and a democracy.

So I urge my colleagues to please join in supporting passage of this important legislation.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3123, which would allow Liberians living in the United States to be eligible for a 1-year extension of their temporary protected status. This measure, introduced by my colleague from Rhode Island, Representative KENNEDY, will give Liberian refugees in our State an opportunity to plan their return home instead of being forced back before they are ready.

For many years, Liberians were ruled by the cruel hands of dictators, including Samuel Doe and Charles Taylor. They controlled their country by fear and violence, which provoked the United States Government in 1991 to seek temporary protected status for Liberian nationals who were in the U.S.

Since Charles Taylor was forced out of office, Liberia has made progress in peace and democracy building efforts, and the election of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2005 has brought stability to the region. President Johnson Sirleaf has made many efforts to improve relations with both the U.S. Government and Liberian communities across our country. However, Liberia's security situation, while stable, is still fragile, and its economy and state structures remain devastated by war.

In Rhode Island, our Liberian population has become part of the fabric of our community. They work for local companies, they attend our schools, and they enrich cities and towns. The majority of Liberians in our State wants to return to their homeland, but they understandably wish to first ensure the country's safety and stability. In the meantime, they are learning how to better serve their country by taking advantage of opportunities offered to them in the United States. They are an integral part of

our communities, and in return, we owe them the chance to return when they are ready—and without fear—to Liberia.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3123, a bill that will extend temporary immigration status for Liberian refugees here in the United States. Minnesota is proud to be the home of over 1,000 Liberian refugees, people who have became our friends and neighbors. Forcing them to return now would be an injustice to not only the Liberians themselves, but to everyone in Minnesota who has come to care for their welfare.

The civil war that shook their country in the early 1990s left 150,000 people dead and nearly a million others displaced. These 1,000 refugees turned to America in their hour of need, and Madam Speaker, I am proud to serve in the Congress of a country that has been willing to help these individuals in their time of greatest hardship.

It has been well over a decade since these Liberian refugees sought Minnesota as a home, and since then they have become upstanding citizens, an important part of the fabric that makes up our communities and economies and neighborhoods. Madam Speaker, I strongly request that my colleagues join me in supporting H.R. 3121.

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3123 and want to thank the gentleman from Rhode Island, my friend Congressman KENNEDY, for his leadership and hard work on this issue. This bill provides support and assistance to our ally Liberia, during a critical time in its social and economic reform and recovery.

Specifically, this bill extends until October 1, 2008, the designation of Liberians living in this country under Temporary Protected Status, TPS. The Department of Homeland Security estimates that only 3,600 Liberians are currently eligible for TPS. Many of these Liberians have been in the U.S. for more than 16 years, and all of them have been here for a minimum of 5 years.

TPS is a temporary immigration status granted to eligible nationals of designated countries. In 1990, as part of the Immigration Act of 1990, Congress established a procedure by which the Attorney General, and now DHS, may provide TPS to people in the United States who are temporarily unable to safely return to their home country because of ongoing armed conflict, an environmental disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions. During the period for which a country has been designated for TPS, TPS beneficiaries may remain in the United States and may obtain work authorization. However, TPS does not lead to permanent resident status, and TPS holders are not illegal immigrants.

Since 1989, Liberia has been ravaged by two brutal civil wars, which have destabilized the region, displaced hundreds of thousands of people, and destroyed the country's economy and infrastructure. In recognition of these conditions, the United States has protected some 3,600 Liberians in the U.S. from having to return to Liberia.

Recently, DHS has decided to terminate these temporary protections in light of the fact that Liberia's civil wars have finally ended and in anticipation of the political stability that newly-elected President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf will bring. However, while there is no question that President Johnson Sirleaf has put Liberia on the road to recovery, that road will unfortunately be very long.

According to a 2006 United Nations report, Liberia is currently enduring an 85 percent unemployment rate and it continues to be one of the poorest countries in the world. Improvements to the country's infrastructure following the war have come slowly, and it continues to suffer from severe shortages in electricity and running water. The country also lacks adequate medical care, as a mere 26 physicians currently practice medicine for a population of some 3.4 million people.

According to Liberian Government officials, their nation is not yet in a position to provide returnees with employment, housing, health services, education services, and other necessary amenities and services. Due to these and other issues, the Liberian Government has stated that the country cannot absorb and provide for the estimated 3,600 Liberians who would be required to return to their homeland.

As an aside, Liberians in the U.S. also provide financial assistance, including remittances averaging about \$6 million monthly, to the Liberian economy. These transfers constitute a vital source of financial assistance and economic stability during the country's still-nascent period of recovery.

President Johnson Sirleaf stated during her address to Congress in March 2006: "For those unable to come back home now, we must appeal to you to grant them continuing protection status, and residency where appropriate, to put them in a condition to contribute to their country's reform and development."

For these reasons, and in order to support Liberia as it emerges from two decades of dictatorship and civil war, I strongly support H.R. 3123 and urge its passage.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3123.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GRANTING THE CONSENT AND APPROVAL OF CONGRESS TO AN INTERSTATE FOREST FIRE PROTECTION COMPACT

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 975) granting the consent and approval of Congress to an interstate forest fire protection compact.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 975

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

SECTION 1. CONSENT OF CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The consent and approval of Congress is given to an interstate forest fire protection compact, as set out in subsection (b).

(b) COMPACT.—The compact reads substantially as follows:

“THE GREAT PLAINS WILDLAND FIRE PROTECTION AGREEMENT

“THIS AGREEMENT is entered into by and between the State, Provincial and Territorial wildland fire protection agencies signatory hereto, hereinafter referred to as ‘Members’.

“FOR, AND IN CONSIDERATION OF the following terms and conditions, the Members agree:

“ARTICLE I

“The purpose of this compact is to promote effective prevention and control of forest fires in the Great Plains region of the United States by the maintenance of adequate forest fire fighting services by the member states, and by providing for reciprocal aid in fighting forest fires among the compacting states of the region, including South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, and any adjoining state of a current member state.

“ARTICLE II

“This compact is operative immediately as to those states ratifying it if any two or more of the member states have ratified it.

“ARTICLE III

“In each state, the state forester or officer holding the equivalent position who is responsible for forest fire control may act as compact administrator for that state and may consult with like officials of the other member states and may implement cooperation between the states in forest fire prevention and control. The compact administrators of the member states may organize to coordinate the services of the member states and provide administrative integration in carrying out the purposes of this compact. Each member state may formulate and put in effect a forest fire plan for that state.

“ARTICLE IV

“If the state forest fire control agency of a member state requests aid from the state forest fire control agency of any other member state in combating, controlling, or preventing forest fires, the state forest fire control agency of that state may render all possible aid to the requesting agency, consonant with the maintenance of protection at home.

“ARTICLE V

“If the forces of any member state are rendering outside aid pursuant to the request of another member state under this compact, the employees of the state shall, under the direction of the officers of the state to which they are rendering aid, have the same powers (except the power of arrest), duties, rights, privileges, and immunities as comparable employees of the state to which they are rendering aid.

“No member state or its officers or employees rendering outside aid pursuant to this compact is liable on account of any act or omission on the part of such forces while so engaged, or on account of the maintenance or use of any equipment or supplies in connection with rendering the outside aid.

“All liability, except as otherwise provided in this compact, that may arise either under the laws of the requesting state or under the laws of the aiding state or under the laws of a third state on account of or in connection with a request for aid, shall be assumed and borne by the requesting state.

“Any member state rendering outside and pursuant to this compact shall be reimbursed by the member state receiving the aid for any loss or damage to, or expense incurred in the operation of any equipment answering a request for aid, and for the cost of all materials, transportation, wages, salaries, and maintenance of employees and equipment incurred in connection with such request. However, nothing in this compact