

such regulations have been issued and are in effect.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than March 6, 2009, the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security shall submit to Congress a report on the effectiveness of the regulations required by subsection (b)(1).

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that the Secretary of Homeland Security submits the certification described in subsection (b)(2) stating that the final regulations required by subsection (b)(1) have been issued and are in effect.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to 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. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

S. 3606 reauthorizes the Special Immigrant Nonminister Religious Worker Program, which provides an avenue for nuns, monks and other religious workers to come to the United States to do their important work. If we do not act, this program will sunset in just 4 days.

On April 15 of this year, we passed H.R. 5570 to reauthorize the program for 7 years. As sent over from the Senate, the bill allows the program to expire on March 6, 2009. While this unfortunate limitation will require Congress to revisit this issue promptly next year, I believe the program is too important to let expire.

The 5,000 religious workers eligible for these visas each year are called to a vocation or are in traditional religious occupations with bona fide non-profit religious organizations. They are missionaries, counselors, religious instructors, and other pastoral care providers.

There is a bipartisan consensus around this program. It has been extended four times since first enacted in 1990. We have worked with Mr. SMITH to craft provisions to guard against potential fraud. The Senate bill incorporates those protections. I think this is a sound bill, and I hope that we're able to pass it tonight.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am happy to have played a part in the creation of the Religious Worker Immigrant Visa program in 1990. These visas enable American religious denominations, large and small, to benefit from committed religious workers from other countries.

Last April, the House passed legislation to extend the program for an additional 7 years. Senator SPECTER introduced legislation in the Senate to extend the program for 3 years. I support this bill today. However, it only reauthorizes the religious worker visa program for about 5 months.

Why such a short reauthorization?

Well, the reason is that some Democrats in the Senate are holding the reauthorization of another vital immigration program hostage. The E-Verify program provides tens of thousands of American employers who want to do the right thing with an effective tool to ensure that they are hiring a legal workforce.

The authorization for E-Verify expires in November, so the House passed a 5-year reauthorization by the overwhelming vote of 407-2. Unfortunately, Democrats in the Senate have refused to pass an extension of E-Verify for longer than 5 months. They refuse to pass a longer extension unless we accede to their demand to increase immigration to the United States by about a half a million people.

Such a demand goes against the clear preference of the American people who support current or reduced levels of immigration. It goes against the interest of American workers who compete with foreign workers for the same jobs, and it goes against the interest of American employers who want to count on E-Verify's being available to them for the long term.

This body is right to reject the demand of the Senate Democrats. Unfortunately, since they will only extend E-Verify for 5 months, we will only get a 5-month extension of the religious worker visa program. So we will need to address this issue again after the 11th Congress convenes next January.

I do appreciate the language in this bill that requires the Department of Homeland Security to expeditiously issue needed regulations to address fraud in the religious worker visa program. I have long been concerned about the high level of fraud that has been evident in this program. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I just want to comment briefly on the March 6 date.

It is my understanding that two Republican Senators requested dramatic changes to the E-Verify program extension that we were able to pass here. When they were unable to get it, the Senate—or I should say the other body—was able to agree on just an extension until March 6. Then the issue was that nothing else was going to go past March 6.

So I think it's interesting to note that, even though we oftentimes have very contentious disagreements on various immigration matters here in the House, we were able to come to an agreement to extend the E-Verify program for an extended period of time. They couldn't get that together in the

Senate, so we're going to, indeed, have to revisit this as well as E-Verify early next year, and we will have to try and come to an agreement that is bipartisan and bicameral. Certainly, we need to approve this today so that religious workers can enrich the lives of our communities. With that, I urge its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, S. 3606 is similar to a bill I authored, H.R. 5570, which passed the House on April 15 of this year.

Both bills would reauthorize the Special Immigrant Non-Minister Religious Worker Program, which allows non-minister religious workers to obtain special immigrant status in the U.S. so that they may do the work required of their faith.

The program is vitally important to religious organizations as it provides in many instances the only avenue for nuns, monks, and other people of faith to come to the United States to fill a vocation or other traditional religious occupation. Those who use the visas come over to serve as missionaries, counselors, translators, religious instructors, cantors, and other pastoral care providers.

Unfortunately, the program is currently set to expire in just a few days.

H.R. 5570, the bill I authored, would have extended the program for several years. But S. 3606, as sent back from the Senate, would extend the program only through March 6, 2009. Although I strongly would have preferred to extend the program for longer, the program is too important to let expire. We should extend the program today to allow us the additional time we need to work out a longer extension.

I also note that the program was first enacted in 1990 and that Congress has extended it four times, most recently in 2003. Working with LAMAR SMITH, the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee, we made changes to the program for the first time to address potential fraudulent uses of the program. The Senate bill includes those protections.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bipartisan legislation.

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 Senate bill, S. 3606.

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.

□ 1900

EXTENDING PROGRAM RELATING TO WAIVER OF FOREIGN COUNTRY RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT WITH RESPECT TO INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 5571) to extend for 5 years the program relating to waiver of the foreign country residence requirement with respect to international

medical graduates, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

On page 2, line 5, strike "June 1, 2013" and insert "March 6, 2009".

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members 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. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5571 reauthorizes a critically important immigration program that helps medically underserved communities attract highly skilled physicians. This program expired on June 1 of this year. On May 21, the House passed this bill with a 5-year reauthorization.

As sent back from the Senate, the bill allows the program to expire again on March 6, 2009. While this unfortunate limitation will require Congress to revisit this issue promptly next year, the program is too important to let expire. The program helps States attract doctors who have received their medical training in the United States and who agree to work in medically underserved areas.

Its importance was demonstrated last year when a tornado utterly destroyed the town of Greensburg, Kansas. That town would not have had doctors without this program, and their presence helped tremendously in the town's ability to keep casualties to a minimum.

We need to keep this program going so that the States can attract medical talent and keep the doors open.

I commend Ranking Member Lamar Smith, as well as my colleague, Sheila Jackson-Lee, for their efforts to bring this bill to the floor, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this bill extends a program that has successfully brought doctors to medically underserved areas in the U.S. The Conrad Program allows foreign doctors who have been here on exchange programs to stay at the conclusion of their residencies if they agree to practice medicine for at least 3 years in health professionals shortage areas.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill. I urge my colleagues to support it.

This bill extends a program that has successfully brought doctors to medically underserved areas in the U.S. The "Conrad" program allows foreign doctors who have been here on exchange programs to stay at the conclusion of their residencies if they agree to practice medicine for at least 3 years in health professional shortage areas.

In May the House passed legislation to extend the program for an additional 5 years. And Senator SPECTER introduced legislation in the Senate to also extend the program for 5 years. Our medically underserved communities deserve a long-term reauthorization of this program so that they can better plan for the future.

I support this bill today. However, it only reauthorizes the Conrad program for about 5 months. Why such a short reauthorization? Well, the reason is that the Democrats on the other side of the Capitol are holding the reauthorization of another vital immigration program hostage.

The E-Verify program provides tens of thousands of American employers who want to do the right thing with an effective way to ensure that they are hiring a legal workforce. The authorization for E-Verify expires in November, so the House passed a 5 year reauthorization by the overwhelming vote of 407 to 2.

Unfortunately, the Democrats in the Senate have refused to pass an extension of E-Verify for longer than 5 months. They refuse to pass a longer extension unless we accede to their demand to increase immigration to the U.S. by over 500,000 persons.

Such a demand goes against the clear preference of the American people who oppose an increase in immigration levels already at a record high. It goes against the interests of American workers in these unsettled economic times. And it goes against the interests of American employers, who want to count on E-Verify being available to them for the long term.

The House is right to reject the demand of the Senate Democrats. Unfortunately, since they will only extend E-Verify for 5 months, we will only get a five month extension of the Conrad program. Thus, we will need to address this issue again after the 111th Congress convenes next winter.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, today, we are preventing a critically important immigration program from expiring.

No one disputes that there is a health care crisis in this country. With our population aging, there is no doubt that the demand for health care will only increase.

The problem is made worse by a shortage of medical professionals, including doctors, in many communities across America. H.R. 5571 will reauthorize a program—the Conrad 30 J Waiver Program—that has been successful at helping medically underserved communities attract highly skilled physicians.

The program allows States to recruit foreign doctors who have received their medical training in the United States, so long as those doctors work in medically underserved areas.

This program is critically important to underserved communities across this country, but it unfortunately expired on June 1, 2008. The House passed the bill on May 21, but the Senate did not act until just yesterday, when it extended the program through March 6, 2009.

Although I would have strongly preferred to reauthorize this program for 5 years, as the bill I introduced stated, this program is too important to let expire as we continue to negotiate the length of time this program should be extended. We must pass this bill today so that we may have the additional time we need to further reauthorize the Conrad 30 J Waiver Program.

I wish to thank LAMAR SMITH, the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee, and Representative SHEILA JACKSON-LEE for their efforts in helping me bring this bill to the floor.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back my time.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I just further urge support of this bill, and I yield back 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 concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 5571.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CAMPUS SAFETY ACT OF 2008

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6838) to establish and operate a National Center for Campus Public Safety.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6838

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Center to Advance, Monitor, and Preserve University Security Safety Act of 2008" or the "CAMPUS Safety Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. NATIONAL CENTER FOR CAMPUS PUBLIC SAFETY.

Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3711 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new part:

"PART 11.—NATIONAL CENTER FOR CAMPUS PUBLIC SAFETY

"SEC. 3021. NATIONAL CENTER FOR CAMPUS PUBLIC SAFETY.

"(a) AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH AND OPERATE CENTER.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services is authorized to establish and operate a National Center for Campus Public Safety (referred to in this section as the 'Center').

"(2) GRANT AUTHORITY.—The Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services is authorized to award grants to institutions of higher education and other non-profit organizations to assist in carrying out the functions of the Center required under subsection (b).

"(b) FUNCTIONS OF THE CENTER.—The Center shall—

"(1) provide quality education and training for campus public safety agencies of institutions of higher education and the agencies' collaborative partners, including campus mental health agencies;