

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it's wonderful to be on the floor here this Saturday evening with you and with my colleague on the full committee. And this is one of several bills that we are bringing to the floor to finish up the work of the Homeland Security Committee for this Congress.

I rise in support of S. 2816, this bill to provide the Secretary of Homeland Security with the authority to appoint the Chief Human Capital Officer at the Department of Homeland Security. The bill was introduced by Senators VOINOVICH and AKAKA, and it repeals a provision in the Homeland Security Act that includes this official among DHS officials to be appointed by the President.

This bill will provide uniformity by allowing DHS to operate under the same guidelines as other Federal agencies, where the head of the agency has the authority to designate the director of human resources.

The Homeland Security Subcommittee on Management, Investigations, and Oversight has held a number of hearings on personnel issues at DHS, and we understand, all of us on the full committee, just how important this bill is.

DHS Undersecretary for Management, Ms. Elaine Duke, has informed Congress about the need for this legislation. Under Elaine Duke's effective leadership and guidance, a number of significant improvements have been made at DHS. She is now overseeing the transition of DHS to the next administration, which is critical to the continued operations of the Department and the security of our Nation.

As everyone in this Chamber knows, the creation of the Department of Homeland Security was the greatest reorganization of the Federal Government since the creation of the Defense Department. And it's had its ups and downs, but I think now it is generally moving in the right direction, and I believe the current Secretary of DHS is to be commended for the tremendous work that he has done.

The Department of Homeland Security Authorization Act for fiscal year 2008 included a number of provisions to strengthen personnel programs and systems at DHS. We in the House passed that bill last year, but the Senate did not. Unfortunately, the House did not act on a DHS authorization bill in 2008. I would hope this would be a priority for the 111th Congress early next year. Until then, I would urge passage of the bill before us today.

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

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, in closing, DHS has a lot of room for improvement when it comes to managing its workforce, as we know in the committee. This bill gives the Secretary the authority to put someone into the position that has a career and work-

force development in the Federal Government. This is an important step.

I urge passage of this bill.

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 North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 2816.

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.

COMMENDING HOMELAND SECURITY DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1429) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the employees of the Department of Homeland Security, their partners at all levels of government, and the millions of emergency response providers and law enforcement agents nationwide should be commended for their dedicated service on the Nation's front lines in the war against acts of terrorism.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1429

Whereas it has been 7 years since the horrific terrorist attacks against the United States and its people on September 11, 2001;

Whereas terrorists around the world continue to plot and plan attacks against the United States and its interests and foreign allies;

Whereas, as evidenced by a suicide bomb attack in Jerusalem that killed 22 people and wounded 140 on March 27, 2002, a car bomb that exploded outside a Marriott Hotel in Jakarta, Indonesia, on August 5, 2003, killing 10 people and wounding 150, 10 bombs that exploded on 4 commuter trains in Madrid on March 11, 2004, killing 191 people, a major anti-terrorist operation by British Police disrupts an alleged bomb plot targeting multiple airplanes bound for the United States flying through Heathrow Airport, near London on August 10, 2006, citizens across the country and in the world should remain vigilant, prepared, and informed;

Whereas during the month of September, the Nation observes National Preparedness Month which is sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security, and encourages all citizens to prepare themselves and their families for possible emergencies by getting an emergency supply kit that will last 72 hours, making a family emergency plan, being informed, and getting involved in the community in organizations such as Citizen Corps, which actively involves citizens in making our communities and our Nation safer, stronger, and better prepared;

Whereas acts of terrorism can exact a tragic human toll, resulting in significant numbers of casualties and disrupting hundreds of thousands of lives, causing serious damage to our Nation's critical infrastructure, and inflicting billions of dollars of costs on both our public and private sectors;

Whereas in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the continuing grave

threat of terrorism, Congress established the Department of Homeland Security in March 2003, bringing together 22 disparate Federal entities, enhancing their capabilities with major new divisions emphasizing terrorism-related information analysis, infrastructure protection, and science and technology, and focusing their employees on the critical mission of defending our Nation against acts of terrorism;

Whereas since its creation, the employees of the Department of Homeland Security have endeavored to carry out this mission with commendable dedication, working with other Federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies and partners at all levels of Government to help secure our Nation's borders, airports, seaports, critical infrastructure, and communities against terrorist attacks;

Whereas our Nation's firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency medical personnel, and other first responders selflessly and repeatedly risk their lives to fulfill their new mission of helping to prevent, protect against, and prepare to respond to acts of terrorism, major disasters, and other emergencies;

Whereas State, local, territorial, and tribal government officials, the private sector, and ordinary citizens across the country have been working in cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security and other Federal Government agencies to enhance our ability to prevent, deter, protect against, and prepare to respond to acts of terrorism;

Whereas all people of the United States can assist in promoting our Nation's overall terrorism and emergency preparedness by remaining vigilant and alert, reporting suspicious activity to proper authorities, and preparing themselves and their families for potential terrorist attacks; and

Whereas all people of the United States should take the opportunity during National Preparedness Month in September 2008 to take steps at home, work, and school to enhance their ability to assist in preventing, protecting against, and preparing to respond to acts of terrorism: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the public servants of the Department of Homeland Security and other Federal agencies for their outstanding contributions to our Nation's homeland security;

(2) salutes the dedication of State, local, territorial, and tribal government officials, the private sector, and citizens across the country for their efforts to enhance the Nation's ability to prevent, deter, protect against, and prepare to respond to potential acts of terrorism;

(3) expresses the Nation's appreciation for the sacrifices and commitment of our law enforcement and emergency response personnel in preventing and preparing to respond to acts of terrorism;

(4) supports the goals and ideals of National Preparedness Month as they relate to the threat of terrorism; and

(5) urges the Federal Government, States, localities, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, other entities, and the people of the United States to observe National Preparedness Month with appropriate events and activities that promote citizen and community preparedness to respond to acts of terrorism.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 1429 was introduced by Congresswoman CLARKE of New York to recognize September as National Preparedness Month.

Just a couple of weeks ago, the Nation observed the somber anniversary of the September 11 attacks, and we watched Hurricane Gustav and Ike batter the gulf coast. Therefore, September is an appropriate month to commend the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security and the State and local first responders who form the first line of defense against these and other threats. I have always said that you can't have homeland security unless you are prepared to have hometown security, and that preparedness starts a community at a time.

This month is a good opportunity for every American to learn about how they can prepare for all types of emergencies, whether it be a terrorist attack or a natural disaster. We can start by taking four little steps: Get an emergency kit; two, develop and communicate with your family a plan for evacuation and shelter; three, be informed about the types of emergencies that you are likely to face; and four; get yourself and your community involved to be better prepared. Better knowledge is power. We must all do our part to ensure that we learn what to do before an emergency occurs.

So, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this House Resolution because I know firsthand that it is best to be prepared, and not scared.

Let us be clear that the dedicated employees of the Department of Homeland Security and other Federal agencies, together with State and local officials and first responders, will do all they can to prepare for, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism, natural disaster, and other emergencies. But the American people can play a significant role by understanding the simple steps they can take to provide for themselves and their family.

Together, a prepared public and a resourceful and dedicated Department of Homeland Security can truly anticipate how to respond to different types of emergencies. In doing so, we will become a more resilient Nation.

Before I close my remarks, though, I would like to thank Congresswoman CLARKE for introducing the resolution.

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

Mr. DANIEL LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 1429, the resolution commemorating the anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11; also promoting the month of September as National Preparedness Month, and commending the employees of the Department of Homeland Security and our Nation's emergency response providers and law enforcement agents.

This September, as we know, marks the fifth annual National Preparedness Month and the seventh anniversary of the terrorist attacks on September 11. H. Res. 1429 is a bipartisan resolution commemorating this important anniversary in our Nation's history and reminding all Americans of the importance of emergency preparedness.

While there has not been a terrorist attack on our U.S. soil since September 11, 2001, it is important to remember that terrorists continue to plan attacks against this Nation, its interests, and its allies abroad. It is not by accident that we have not had such a tragedy. It is, in fact, the result of tremendous work by men and women in uniform, in our agencies, first responders, the coordination that's taken place since then, the cooperation we've had with our allies in many, many other countries.

But we must remain vigilant and ensure that all levels of government, non-profit organizations, the private sector, individuals, and communities continue to prepare for terrorist attacks, natural disasters, or other emergencies.

Each September, various Department of Homeland Security components, along with other Federal, State and local agencies, nonprofit organizations and the private sector take part in events to increase public awareness and encourage individuals to prepare themselves, their families, their businesses and their communities for emergencies.

The Ready Campaign, which is within the Office of Public Affairs at the Department, along with the Citizen Corps Program within the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, helps educate individuals, families and communities on the steps that they can take to protect their loved ones in an emergency. For instance, individuals are encouraged to get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about different types of emergencies and the appropriate responses thereto.

Since the Ready Campaign and National Preparedness Month were initiated in 2004, the effort has received over \$703 million in donated media support. The www.ready.gov Web site has received over 2 billion hits, with almost 30 million unique visitors to the site. And the national 1-800 number has received 345,000 calls.

In addition, Ready has partnered with Scholastic to provide emergency preparedness materials for the classroom to 400,000 teachers, and recently launched a partnership with Sesame Street to help educate preschool-age children and their parents on the need to prepare for emergencies.

This resolution also commends the hard work and dedication of the Federal, State and local government employees, first responders, the private sector, and citizens across the country for their efforts to enhance the Nation's ability to prepare for, protect against, and respond to acts of terrorism and other emergencies.

Working together, we can continue to protect this country from terrorists wishing us harm. I urge all Members to join in supporting this resolution.

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

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GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may 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 gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, with that, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentlelady who is a sponsor of this resolution, Ms. CLARKE from New York.

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of House Resolution 1429, which recognizes September as National Emergency Preparedness Month. I would like to thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) for managing this very important resolution.

This resolution applauds the public servants at the Department of Homeland Security for their outstanding dedication to securing our Nation. More importantly, the resolution also encourages citizens to prepare themselves and their families to respond to emergencies, whether it's an act of terrorism, a natural disaster or another crisis.

As the sole member of the Committee on Homeland Security who resides in the City of New York, I am keenly aware that one of the most important lessons from the tragic attacks on September 11, 2001 and from Hurricane Katrina is that each and every American must be vigilant about their preparedness for an emergency.

As we all know, with the recent bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Pakistan, terrorism is alive and well and continues to be a very real threat in this world. Likewise, this country has experienced widespread wildfires in the West, numerous tornadoes in the Southeast, overwhelming floods in the Midwest, and late this summer the Gulf States were wracked by Hurricanes Fay, Gustav, Hannah and most recently Ike.

The dedicated workers of the Department of Homeland Security and other Federal agencies successfully coordinated with State and local officials and the private sector to assist with the pre-positioning of lifesaving equipment, evacuation efforts and search-and-rescue methods. Similarly, we saw Members helping their fellow brothers and sisters in their time of need.

This marks the fifth year that DHS has observed September as the National Emergency Preparedness Month. In promoting this, DHS has partnered with over 1,700 organizations, including the American Red Cross, in its efforts

to reach out to the public. Since this is National Emergency Preparedness Month, this is an ideal time for all of us to collectively prepare for all types emergencies. Among the department's recommendations to help Americans prepare for emergencies are: Number one, get a kit. Build a disaster supply kit that includes enough supplies for each family member for 3 days and remember to check the kit every 6 months. Number two, make a plan. Every family should develop, communicate and practice their evacuation or other sheltering. Number 3, be informed about the type of disasters or emergencies that may occur where you live, work and/or play and how they can affect you, your family and community. Number 4, get involved. After preparing yourself and your family for possible emergencies by getting a kit, making a plan and being informed, take the next step in getting involved in preparing your community.

I ask my fellow colleagues to encourage their constituents to visit the Federal government's Citizen Corps website at www.citizencorps.gov to learn how we can bring key community figures together to plan for, mitigate, respond to or recover from an emergency.

I am also happy to note that more than 2,200 State, local, tribal and territorial governments in all States and U.S. territories have formed Citizen Corps Councils, and that every day, new councils are formed in communities around the country.

Before I close my remarks, I would like to thank and express my gratitude to Homeland Security Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON and Ranking Member PETER KING for their support for this resolution and their leadership on preparedness issues.

Further, I want to thank the subcommittee chairman, HENRY CUELLAR of the Subcommittee on Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response for sponsoring H.R. 5890, the Citizen and Community Preparedness Act. Mr. CUELLAR has championed the authorization of Citizen Corps, and he, too, encourages every citizen to get involved to improve their individual and community's preparedness. Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank my Republican colleagues for cosponsoring this resolution. After all, preparedness is not a partisan matter.

In closing, I want to honor all of the heroes and heroines who dedicate their lives to keeping Americans safe. I urge the citizens of this great Nation to visit the website, www.ready.gov so we can all learn how to be vigilant, alert and prepared for an emergency.

I urge all my colleagues to adopt this resolution.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I would urge support for this bill.

With that, I would yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, as you have heard, H.R. 1429 encourages citizens to prepare themselves and their families on how to respond to emergencies, whether it be an act of terror, a natural disaster or other crisis. This is the fifth year the Department of Homeland Security has partnered with over 1,700 organizations, including the American Red Cross, to promote September as National Preparedness Month. With continuing threats of terrorism and increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters, Americans should prepare themselves, their families and their communities.

Everyone should do the four things we talked about. Get an emergency kit. Prepare and communicate to family and friends their evacuation and shelter plans. Be informed about the type of emergencies, and get the family and community involved.

Constituents should be encouraged to visit the following website. You have heard it twice already, www.ready.gov or www.redcross.org.

In closing, H.R. 1429 enjoys broad bipartisan support. I encourage the adoption of this resolution.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 1429 which applauds the public servants at Department of Homeland Security for their outstanding dedication to securing our Nation.

More importantly, House Resolution 1429 encourages citizens to prepare themselves and their families to respond to emergencies—whether it is an act of terror, natural disaster and other crisis.

The Department of Homeland Security has partnered with over 1,700 organizations, including the American Red Cross, to promote September as the National Preparedness Month.

In fact, this is the 5th year that the Department of Homeland Security has observed September as the National Emergency Preparedness Month.

As a former volunteer firefighter, I know that lives are saved when the public takes steps to prepare for the worst.

Likewise, as the Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, I want the people of this Nation to take the necessary steps to prepare themselves in the event of an emergency.

Constituents should be encouraged to visit the following websites to get information on how to be prepared for different types of emergencies: www.ready.gov and www.redcross.org.

Among the Department's recommendations to help Americans prepare for emergencies are:

1. Get a Kit—Build a disaster supplies kit that includes enough supplies for each family member for three days and remember to check the kit every six months. Be sure that the kit includes water, food, medicine, batteries, flashlights, hygiene materials, blankets, etc.

2. Make a Plan—Every family should develop and communicate with each other their evacuation or sheltering plan. The plan should correspond to the school, work and community of every member of the family. All families are encouraged to practice this plan to ensure familiarity with evacuation or meeting routes,

have cell phones charged and have a charger in the car.

It should be known that at times it may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.

Also every family should have a secure location of important documents such as, insurance papers, etc.

3. Be informed about the type of disasters or emergencies that may occur where you live, work and play and how they can affect you, your family and community. In other words do you live in a place prone to hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, etc? Every citizen should also learn about what to do in the event of a biological, chemical, explosive, nuclear or radiological attack.

It is important to identify how authorities will notify you and how you will get important information.

You should learn what you can do to prepare for that emergency as well as first aid, CPR and disaster training.

Consider sharing what you have learned with your family, neighbors and friends.

4. Get Involved—After preparing yourself and your family for possible emergencies by getting a kit, making a plan and being informed, take the next step and get involved in preparing your community. The American public should visit the www.citizencorps.com website to learn about how Citizen Corps brings together community, emergency and government leaders to involve community members in emergency preparedness, planning, mitigation, response and recovery.

More than 2,200 state, local, tribal and territorial governments in all 56 states and U.S. territories have formed Citizen Corps Councils, and every day new Councils are formed in communities around the country.

These Councils assist with outreach and educational efforts to the public; training and exercises that effectively integrate emergency responders, volunteers with a response role, and the general public; and volunteer programs that support emergency response services.

I conclude by asking my colleagues to adopt this resolution.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1429.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NAVAL VESSEL TRANSFER ACT OF 2008

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7177) to authorize the transfer of naval vessels to certain foreign recipients, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows: