

protecting the country's transportation security systems. A single tip-off of a covert test is too many. We have already had three we know of. We must do our part to stop the next one from happening. We must do whatever we can to ensure that these tests remain covert and candid so we can truly evaluate our transportation security workers.

I look forward to working with my colleagues as we move forward on this important legislation that will make our transportation systems more secure. I ask my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5909, Catching Operational Vulnerabilities by Ensuring Random Testing Act of 2008, introduced by my distinguished colleague from New York, Representative LOWE. This important legislation will further shore up the gaps in our testing and evaluation protocols for transportation security.

As we've seen just in the past year, the details of covert tests and evaluations have been disseminated to the screener workforce, thereby "tipping-off" those we are trying to accurately and responsibly test. The Committee on Homeland Security has been extremely concerned about this issue and I have held hearings in the Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection, of which I am the chair, in order to examine what exactly has gone wrong.

Any efforts to compromise these important testing efforts, whether intentional or on accident, should not be tolerated. Some have claimed that one of these incidents—the April 2006 e-mail from TSA's Office of Security Operations that tipped TSA field staff off to covert tests—was unintentional, but evidence suggests otherwise. The April 2006 e-mail clearly referenced that individuals who were probing the system were Federal employees and even provided a physical description of one of the employees conducting the tests. This bill is necessary to prohibit individuals from providing advance notice of covert tests to any persons, unless authorized to do so by the Assistant Secretary of the Transportation Security Administration, the Inspector General of the Department, or the Comptroller General of the United States.

The COVERT Act of 2008 explicitly prohibits the advance notice or notification to individuals by those employees who are participating in a covert test or evaluation, which will ensure that the integrity of all covert testing efforts—across all modes of transportation—are protected, not just aviation. This legislation puts in place controls to monitor the testing personnel and the testing and evaluation procedures by building in accountability. It establishes the presence of a second team of covert test and evaluation employees with the first team in order to monitor and confirm their actions. Finally, the act requires an impact study to evaluate covert testing and evaluation and how it could be incorporated into other training and testing programs. The study is required to include: Recommendations on the implementation and execution of this section; an assessment on the results of covert testing; a summary of best practices on how to best integrate covert testing into other programs; and recommendations for additional personnel

training necessary to fulfill this act. The study and report will also provide an assessment on the test and evaluation results and recommendations for personnel training required to fulfill the act.

Mr. Speaker, if we choose to ignore these past disclosures, we provide future opportunities to compromise a worthy program intended to educate the workforce and benefit the security of our transportation systems throughout the country. One tip-off of a covert test is one too many. We've already had three that we know of. Let's do our part to stop any future tip-offs.

I am proud to support this incredibly important and timely legislation and I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. 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 Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5909, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1150) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Transportation Security Administration should, in accordance with the congressional mandate provided for in the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, enhance security against terrorist attack and other security threats to our Nation's rail and mass transit lines, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1150

Whereas the Transportation Security Administration is uniquely positioned to lead the efforts to secure our Nation's rail and mass transit lines from the threat of terrorism as a result of expertise developed through over five years of securing our Nation's commercial air transportation system;

Whereas the successes of the Transportation Security Administration's National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program has furthered the Transportation Security Administration's ability to provide security against terrorist attacks on the Nation's transportation systems by preventing and protecting against explosives threats;

Whereas each weekday 11,300,000 passengers depend on our Nation's mass transit lines as a means of transportation, and mass transit lines serve as an enticing target for terrorists as evidenced by the March 11, 2004, attack on the Madrid, Spain, mass transit system, the July 7, 2005, attack on the London, England, mass transit system, and the July 11, 2006, attack on the Mumbai, India, mass transit system;

Whereas each weekday more than 25 million children depend on our Nation's school transportation system, in addition to mass transit systems, to get to and from school and school activities, and the security of these systems must be enhanced to address the threat of terrorism; and

Whereas securing our Nation's rail and mass transit lines from terrorist attack and other security threats is essential due to their impact on our Nation's economic stability and the continued functioning of our national economy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Transportation Security Administration should—

(1) continue to enhance security against terrorist attack and other security threats to our Nation's rail and mass transit lines, as well as school transportation systems, including as provided for in the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-53);

(2) continue development of the National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program, which has proven to be an effective tool in securing against explosives threats to our Nation's rail and mass transit lines, with particular attention to the application of its training standards and the establishment of a reliable source of domestically-bred canines;

(3) improve upon the success of the Online Learning Center by providing increased person-to-person professional development programs to ensure those responsible for securing against terrorist attacks on our transportation systems are highly trained in both securing against terrorist attacks and professional relations with the traveling public; and

(4) continue to secure our Nation's mass transit and rail lines against terrorist attack and other security threats, so as to ensure the security of commuters on our Nation's mass transit lines and prevent the disruption of rail lines critical to our Nation's economy, and to give special attention to school transportation systems by working with school administrators, State and local law enforcement, and other representatives in the school transportation industry to keep children safe from terrorist attack.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. 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 measure under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this measure and I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 1150 was introduced earlier this year by Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE. The resolution was marked up and adopted unanimously by the Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection on May 1. The full committee approved it unanimously on May 20.

I would like to congratulate Congresswoman JACKSON-LEE who is both

the sponsor of the resolution and the subcommittee chairwoman. I strongly believe that this legislation fits well with the work that the committee has done on H.R. 1684, the DHS authorization bill that is pending before the Senate. As we approach the 1-year anniversary of H.R. 1, the Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007, there is much still to be done to secure rail and mass transit systems in the United States from the threat of the terrorist attack.

Each weekday, 11.3 million passengers in 23 States use commuter heavy or light rail. History has shown that terrorists view rail and public transportation systems as attractive targets. In 2004, terrorist bombs tore through Madrid's rail system, killing and maiming hundreds of innocent commuters. Next month, of course, marks the third anniversary of the terrorist bombings of London's public transportation system. And just in the last 2 years, transportation systems in Mumbai, India, were attacked twice.

Since the 9/11 attacks, there has been justifiable attention paid to enhancing aviation security. However, the security needs for rail and public transportation have, at the same time, been largely neglected. Last year, we took steps toward ending the secondary status by passing H.R. 1. H.R. 1, now Public Law 110-53, includes wide-range surface transportation security provisions and authorizes \$3.5 billion for transit security and \$2 billion for rail security.

The legislation before us today, House Resolution 1150, renews the call for TSA to enhance security against terrorist attack and other security threats to our Nation's rail and mass transit lines. Specifically, it instructs TSA to strengthen security efforts towards rail lines, mass transit lines, and school transportation systems across the country. It also directs TSA to build on successful programs such as its canine detection and online learning programs, to expand the program's reach and to further strengthen transportation security across the country. TSA is uniquely positioned to be a leader in securing rail and mass transit systems from the threat of terrorism because of its experience in protecting commercial aviation.

Finally, I would note that House Resolution 1150 includes language authored by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) that gives appropriate consideration to the security needs of school transportation systems. This resolution continues the effort by the Committee on Homeland Security to raise rail and mass transit security to the prominence it deserves. I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 1150.

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

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 1150 and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as the chairman has said, we have worked, and the execu-

tive branch has worked, to enhance the security of this Nation since the terrible episode of 9/11. However, I think it would not surprise people to understand that we put primary focus on aviation safety since that was the means, that is aviation, that was utilized by the terrorists on 9/11.

We have done a good job with it. A couple of years ago, we passed the SAFE Port Act, which I think gave tremendous enhancement to the security measures that are utilized in our ports. This resolution recognizes that we need to do more in the area of rail and mass transit. I do not view that as a criticism of anybody. Rather, I view that as a call to arms, so to speak, an urgency imprinted on the concern that we have in this area of potential vulnerability.

I would particularly point to the part of the resolution that states that TSA should continue to develop the National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program and to utilize it with respect to our Nation's rail and mass transit line. One of the things that I think we have realized, on both sides of the aisle, is the tremendous capabilities of canines and the application of canine teams in a number of different areas of security in a number of different transportation modes.

I would say that I would hope that at some point in time, we might also be able to bring to the floor legislation dealing with the trucking industry. There is bipartisan commitment to do that. The gentleman from Mississippi has had a bill that a number of us have worked on, along with the gentlelady from Texas and others, that would enhance the security nature of our trucking system and would, at the same time, make careful distinctions between security-sensitive materials and otherwise hazardous materials. And that distinction would therefore not disadvantage certain drivers in the United States that otherwise might be prohibited from being able to drive hazardous material that is not security sensitive. I know the gentleman from Mississippi and the gentlelady from Texas are committed to that. I hope that we might be able to see some progress on that in the future as well.

Again, I think this resolution is worthy of support by all in this Chamber.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the gentleman that he will see some progress on the trucking legislation in the not-too-distant future.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas, the author of the resolution, Ms. JACKSON-LEE.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Let me thank the chairman of the full committee for his leadership and the consistency of the methodical pathway to securing America. That is what we are

doing here today. I want to acknowledge the ranking member of the committee and my ranking member, Mr. LUNGREN of California, because we have worked together as a committee to focus on a number of issues, including chemical security and an overview of infrastructure protection and now this legislation.

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I also think it is important to note that we have committed, as the chairman has indicated, that we will look at the security measures needed for the trucking industry.

But we should get a sense of the roadmap that is being created here on the floor today. And as we look at the bills that we have discussed, each one of them are building blocks toward the response to the 9/11 families, who, day after day after 9/11 told this Congress to get its act together, starting first, of course, with the bill of Congresswoman CLARKE that emphasizes that if we have a watch list, that watch list should be a watch list that is both accurate and secure, and that hard working Americans have to have their civil liberties protected, so if they are on the list by mistake we must avoid or find a process of appeal for the mistakes that are being made.

Then, of course, I think it is noteworthy, as the chairman brought forward his bill on biometric, that we found incidences in Chicago where these cards that are being used by airport employees were fraudulently produced and large numbers of them found, a cache of them found in the hands of employees, so that people who are not credentialed can get on the airport surface because of this fraudulence. So this biometric study is extremely important.

Having just come back from Boston Logan Airport, we also note that the bill by Congresswoman LOWEY is very important, so that we are on our toes about ensuring that those who are working at these airports are not tipped off about testing or having them go through security, so that the four corners of airports are secure.

Now we come full circle, and this legislation, H. Res. 1150, goes back again to the heart of the purpose of the 9/11 Commission. It was a holistic approach to security, for we have seen the tragedy of being lax on airport security.

And I might imagine that those of you who are visiting the United States Congress who might have taken airplanes have gone through security, and it might have been a crowded line. But you are adhering to the rules because you know that we are working together to secure the homeland.

But the homeland is more than just aviation. It is also rail. And this legislation is part of the approach that the Homeland Security Committee is taking, and seriously taking, as its responsibilities of oversight.

Each weekday, 11,300,000 passengers depend on our Nation's mass transit

lines as a means of transportation. Our Nation's mass transit lines serve as a target for terrorist attacks, as evidenced by the March 11, 2004, attack on the Madrid, Spain, mass transit system; the July 7, 2005, attack on the London, England, mass transit system; and the July 11, 2006, attack on the Mumbai, India, mass transit system.

These systems are vulnerable, and the TSA Administration through the development of its National Explosive Detection Canine Team Program furthered its ability to provide security against terrorist attacks on the Nation's transportation systems by preventing and protecting our explosive threats.

However, it is important for the administration and the Transportation Security Administration to be reminded of the Nation's rail and mass transit lines, that they should remain secure from terrorist attack, as they are critical in the functioning of our Nation's economy and they serve as a means of transportation on a daily basis for millions of hard working Americans.

So this legislation is a wake-up call. It is in fact to remind the administration that we have to do more work on transportation security inasmuch as we have seen done by others.

In 1995, the Irish Republican Army waged a long-running terrorist campaign against the London Underground.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. I yield an additional minute to the gentlewoman.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Texas is recognized for 1 additional minute.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Palestinian terrorists have carried out suicide bombings on Israeli buses. And so this legislation is to emphasize again that attacks on mass transit are possible and therefore we should look seriously at providing the security necessary.

Just recently I held a field hearing in New York to look at the ways of the New York transit system and how they were securing their particular system, one of the largest in the Nation. We learned that the National Explosive Detection Canine Team Program was very important, and therefore we want the TSA to continue that. We need TSA to continue to develop training programs for frontline workers and fulfill the other mandates Congress put in place in the 9/11 bill to increase security on rail and mass transit. This resolution is to provide that roadmap and to emphasize to TSA how important mass transit security is.

Might I just conclude by suggesting as my colleagues have discussed this whole question of energy, just think about a secure mass transit that will allow us to engage in a transit system that actually works.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. I yield 1 additional minute to the gentlewoman.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Texas is recognized for 1 additional minute.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the distinguished chairman.

A secure mass transit will encourage more Americans to utilize our transit and our transportation system that is a public transit system. That is what those of us on this side of the aisle believe, a green economy, conservation, efficiency. And coming from Texas I would say to my good friend from California, we have happily lived with safe and secure and environmentally safe drilling and we encourage our very strong companies to continue to do so. But, at the same time, the word "energy" is a broad term. Green energy, efficiency, conservation. That is what this Congress has to preach to the American public, and safe and secure mass transit, of which all of these legislative initiatives are planning to do.

I would ask my colleagues in particular to support the legislation presently under consideration dealing with the mass transit resolution and all the other bills that have been able to come forward out of Homeland Security and under the Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 1150, Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Transportation Security Administration should, in accordance with the congressional mandate provided for in the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, enhance security against terrorist attack and other security threats to our Nation's rail and mass transit lines, introduced by myself. I rise today to offer this Resolution regarding the role of the Transportation Security Administration in securing our Nation's rail and mass transit lines.

This Resolution reaffirms the congressional mandate provided for in the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 that the Transportation Security Administration enhance security against terrorist attack and other security threats to our Nation's rail and mass transit lines. I am pleased to have Homeland Security Committee Chairman BENNIE THOMPSON, as an original cosponsor of this resolution. Chairman THOMPSON has been a leader in our efforts to secure against terrorist threats to our Nation's rail and mass transit lines.

Madam Speaker, each weekday 11,300,000 passengers depend on our Nation's mass transit lines as a means of transportation. Our Nation's mass transit lines serve as a target for terrorist attack as evidenced by the March 11, 2004, attack on the Madrid, Spain, mass transit system, the July 7, 2005, attack on the London, England, mass transit system, and the July 11, 2006, attack on the Mumbai, India, mass transit system. The Transportation Security Administration has, through the development of its National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program furthered its ability to

provide security against terrorist attacks on the Nation's transportation systems by preventing and protecting against explosives threats.

It is imperative that our Nation's rail and mass transit lines remain secure from terrorist attack as they are critical to the functioning of our Nation's economy and serve as a means of transportation on a daily basis for millions of hard working Americans. Successful attacks against rail and mass transit targets have been carried out worldwide by terrorist looking to create havoc, economic harm, and kill innocent people.

Throughout the world, mass transit systems have long been targets of terrorist attacks. Algerian extremists set off bombs on the subways of Paris in 1995 and 1996; the Irish Republican Army waged a long-running terrorist campaign against the London Underground; Palestinian terrorists have carried out suicide bombings on Israel's buses; Chechnyan terrorists killed 40 people by bombing the Moscow subway in 2004; and, in the first terrorist use of a chemical weapon, a Japanese cult—Aum Shinrykyo—released sarin gas on a Tokyo subway in 1995.

Recent events make it clear that the threat continues. On the morning of March 11, 2004, ten explosions occurred at the height of the Madrid rush hour aboard four commuter trains. On July 7, 2005, during the morning peak travel hours, three separate explosions ripped through the London Underground and a fourth explosion occurred on a double-decker bus. These four explosions, the result of coordinated suicide bombings by British-born Islamic extremists, claimed the lives of 56 people and seriously injured hundreds more. Two weeks later, on July 21, 2005, another group of terrorists unsuccessfully attempted to attack London's mass transit system again. On July 11, 2006 a series of seven bomb blasts against the Suburban Railway in Mumbai, formerly known as Bombay, capital city of the Indian state of Maharashtra and India's financial capital resulted in 207 lost lives and over 700 injured.

The recent attacks serve as a harsh reminder of mass transit and rail security vulnerabilities. Both mass transit and rail systems are public and used by millions of people daily. Because of their size, openness, and highly-networked character, there are no obvious checkpoints, like those at airports, to inspect passengers and parcels. Passengers are strangers, promising attackers anonymity and easy escape.

And attacks on mass transit—the circulatory systems of urban areas—can cause widespread fear, severely disrupt economic activity, kill or injure large numbers of people, and alter our way of life. An attack on our freight rail, either the material being transported, such as hazardous materials, or vital commodities, or merely the system itself, could severely impact our national economy.

As a result, both mass transit and rail systems are attractive targets. Since September 11, 2001, according to the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, mass transit systems have been the target of more than 145 terrorist attacks.

Due to their existence in high-population, high-risk urban areas, mass transit systems are also inevitably affected by any terrorist attack that may occur within that jurisdiction—regardless of whether the transit system was the

target of the attack. For example, during September 11, 2001, two of New York City's busiest transit stations were lost and considerable damage occurred to the tunnel structures, endangering hundreds of lives underground. Great care was required to evacuate passengers, locate and rescue trapped transit cars, and communicate instructions. The damage in New York City was so great that in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Congress appropriated \$1.8 billion to rebuild the subway infrastructure that was damaged in the attacks. I am hopeful that through this legislation we can prevent such attacks rather than face the tragic consequences of 9/11 again.

I refuse to sit idly by and allow another 9/11 or Madrid, London, or Mumbai bombing to disrupt our Nation and its critical infrastructure—it is with that conviction that I seek to address these issues. The recent world events should serve as a wake-up call that we must do more to secure our transportation systems and we must act quickly and responsibly. I firmly believe that the legislation before us today will take an important step in securing our transportation systems.

Pursuant to the Aviation and Transportation Security Act of 2001, ATSA, the Transportation Security Administration, TSA, is responsible for the security of all modes of transportation including rail and mass transit. TSA, however, has focused the majority of its resources and assets on aviation security in the past five years. I could go on with other examples, but what these instances show is that clearly it is imperative that TSA value rail and mass transit security on equal footing with aviation security. We are satisfied with the progress that TSA has made with the National Explosive Detection Team Program, but more is needed to train frontline employees.

Congress, recognizing TSA's lack of progress in developing a security strategy for all modes of transportation, mandated the development of a National Strategy for Transportation Security in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, 9/11 Act. This strategy, although due April 1, 2005, was not finalized by TSA until September 2005. Moreover, the document provided by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) did not meet the requirements set out by Congress, especially with regards to rail and mass transit security. Furthermore, subsequent congressionally mandated updates were also not met by TSA, resulting in the 9/11 Discourse Project giving the TSA a C— for its efforts.

TSA's failure to assume a leadership position on surface transportation security is plainly evident. It is time that we take action and leadership to help protect the more than 11.3 million passengers in 35 metropolitan areas and 22 states who use commuter, heavy, or light rail each weekday. There must be substantial penalties for those who do not follow the security plans, vulnerability assessments, and regulations set out in this legislation.

H. Res. 1150 is a straightforward resolution, but a very important one. Recognizing that TSA is the lead agency for transportation security, and all of the hard work Congress did last year to make rail and mass transit security programs more robust in the enactment of the 9/11 bill, we must continue to push TSA to fulfill the mandates for rail and mass transit security required by Congress.

Last month, the Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection,

which I have the privilege of chairing, held a field hearing in New York City on efforts to secure rail and mass transit. It was a truly edifying experience. We learned much about what is being done to secure the New York Transit system and other systems across the Nation, and what TSA can do in its leadership role at the federal level, to facilitate these efforts. I want to commend TSA on its progress with the National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program, since most successful attacks on rail and mass transit are carried out using IEDs. However, we need TSA to continue to develop training programs for frontline workers, and fulfill the other mandates Congress put in place in the 9/11 bill to increase security on rail and mass transit.

TSA should reinvigorate their efforts to fulfill the mandates of the 9/11 bill. TSA has not submitted to the Committee on Homeland Security the National Strategy for Public Transportation Security which was mandated by the 9/11 bill, along with other deadlines including training regulations for frontline workers. TSA must submit this to both comply with the law and more importantly to protect Americans.

I find it completely appalling that this Administration seems to be unwilling to act on rail and mass transit security until we are faced with another disaster. I shudder to think that if the Washington, DC or New York subway systems were attacked, and mass casualties resulted, that we would be thinking that more could have been done to prevent such a tragedy. We will be desperately trying to figure out how to prepare for a disaster that has already happened and holding hearing after hearing to find out where we dropped the ball. The time to prepare is now, and I am committed to securing our Nation's rail and mass transit system expeditiously. We have been blessed thus far that our rail and public transportation systems have not been attacked. We should make our best efforts to ensure that we do not overlook this blessing.

From the terrorist attacks that have occurred around the world, we know that terrorists will target our rail and public transportation systems. Despite this admonition, the agency created and funded by Congress to address the issue of transportation security has consistently dropped the ball when it comes to rail and public transportation. We cannot let the lessons of Madrid, London, and Mumbai go unheeded. For the sake of the millions of Americans who use our rail and mass transit systems everyday to go to work, school, and visit friends and family, we have to take charge on this security risk.

We owe it to the public to safeguard the modes of transportation that allow them to carry on with their lives and drive this economy. Millions of men and women ride our Nation's rail and public transportation systems everyday; we owe it to them to ensure that they can do so safely and securely. I hope that through today's hearing and our continued efforts on the issue of rail and mass transit security, we can resolve the asymmetric way in which we treat aviation versus rail security and resolve the substantial threat posed by inadequate security on our rail and mass transit system.

I want to thank my colleagues for all of their hard work and dedication to these important issues.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE), who has a real interest in broadening the scope of this study.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Mississippi for yielding.

I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I thank the gentlewoman from Texas for introducing this important piece of legislation.

As has been indicated, every day over 36 million people travel on forms of mass transit or public transportation in this country. More than 11 million commuters use rail and mass transit, while over twice this number, more than 25 million, use public or private school buses to travel to and from their schools.

As a former superintendent of schools of the State of North Carolina, I know how important these systems are to delivering our most precious cargo, our school children, to and from school safely and securely. Just as we have a responsibility to ensure the public can travel on rail and mass transit confident of their safety, we have an equal responsibility to make sure that our school bus routes are secure.

I thank Congresswoman JACKSON-LEE for her hard work, Chairman THOMPSON for working with me to include this piece of legislation in this resolution, and I want to thank Ranking Member KING for his help also.

School buses have been targets for terrorists not only in countries such as Israel, Thailand, Yemen and African countries, but also Canada and the United States. Last year, the FBI warned that members of extremist groups have purchased school buses and obtained licenses to operate them.

An attack on a school bus would be devastating, not only in lives harmed, but also the psychological and symbolic impact. We owe our children and their families no less than that we will be able to confidently say that their transportation is secure.

Earlier this year in a 9/11 bill, Congress required TSA to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment on school transportation. They are making progress on this goal. We need to make sure that this assessment is completed on time and that it is followed with efforts to keep our children safe as they travel to and from school activities.

The provisions of this resolution shows that Congress is serious about providing that confidence for rail, for mass transit, as well as for school transportation. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 1150.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I have no more speakers. If the gentleman from California has no more speakers, I am prepared to close after the gentleman closes.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise again in support of H. Res. 1150, expressing the

sense of the House of Representatives that TSA should in accordance with the congressional mandate provided for in implementing recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, enhance security against terrorist attack and other security threats to our Nation's rail and mass transit lines.

I think we have already spoken about why this is important, why we need to move in this area, as we have moved in effectively in the areas of aviation safety and port and marine safety. We cannot leave out any element of our overall programs. And I thank the gentleman from Mississippi, the chairman, for informing me that we should expect to see some action on legislation dealing with the trucking industry, a goal that he and I share.

Madam Speaker, as I have reflected on much of the rail industry, I have noticed that they are powered oftentimes by diesel engines. As I have reflected on mass transit in most of our intercity and intercity communities where we are dealing with buses, I have noted that they have been powered by diesel. In some cases for environmental purposes we have encouraged the use of natural gas.

That is why, Madam Speaker, it is disappointing to see that we have made it more difficult and more expensive for those who operate those buses and operate those trains to continue to operate because of the increasingly high energy costs. I have been informed that my home State of California has a substantial portion of its electricity that is produced by way of natural gas. So when we talk about the need, the demand, it seems to me we should also look at the supply side equation as well.

Not even talking about offshore potential for oil and gas, we should look at onshore oil and gas and the potential for creating more product, American product, for these mass transit systems that we are talking about here today with this bill.

So, if we would just look at total onshore oil and gas, not including oil shale, we would find this: Onshore Federal lands contain an estimated 31 billion barrels of oil and 231 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. I am not misstating that. That is 31 billion barrels of oil and 231 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, those figures according to the Bureau of Land Management. The Federal Government currently denies or restricts by way of congressional mandate, denies or restricts access to 92 percent of this oil and 90 percent of this natural gas.

In other words, we are saying to the American people who want to use these mass transit systems as well as use their own automobiles, that the very source that provides the energy for those modes of transportation, that is oil and natural gas, we are going to deny 28.5 billion barrels of the oil and 207.9 trillion cubic feet of this natural gas.

Now, it is beyond the scope of this bill perhaps to talk about heating. We

are going to be in winter, even though it seems difficult in some of these sweltering summer days or pre-summer days to think about that, but we will be in winter when we are talking about the heating needs of the American people, and we should look at the price of natural gas, as it is going up and on up and up, as are our gas prices.

Only 8 percent, that is 2.48 billion barrels of the oil out of the potential 31 billion barrels of oil, and 10 percent of the natural gas, 23.1 trillion cubic feet of the 231 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, are accessible under standard leasing terms.

So what we have done to the American people by way of congressional action is say that we are only going to allow you to have access to 8 percent of the oil and 10 percent of the natural gas. Or another way of saying it is we are going to lock up 92 percent of the oil and 90 percent of the natural gas, even though you are desperate in terms of the impact of energy price increases on your everyday living.

□ 1215

It's not just at the gas pump, it is as it trickles through or ripples through the entire economy. Every bit of food that we buy today is transported from somewhere else, so the costs of transportation are going to be included in the cost of food to the American people. As we talk to the need for us to enhance our security against terrorist attack and other security threats to our rail and mass transit lines, let's understand the national security implications of denying those very lines, rail and mass transit lines, the energy that they need to move.

Again, I support H. Res. 1150 as a bipartisan product of the Homeland Security Committee, which, I think we can proudly say, works on a bipartisan basis.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

House Resolution 1150 sends the right message at the right time. It reminds TSA of the House's continued interest in seeing progress on securing our rail and mass transit systems.

Last year we took steps towards that goal by passing H.R. 1 legislation, that I was proud to author. That landmark Homeland Security law took a comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges of securing rail and mass transit, viewing it as a critical infrastructure that is essential to effective operations of our national economy.

Incidentally, with gas over \$4 a gallon, America's reliance on these systems is only going to increase. Today I am proud to stand here and renew the call for meaningful progress and urge passage of H. Res. 1150.

Madam Speaker, I urge passage of the resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1150, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL BOMBING PREVENTION ACT OF 2008

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4749) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish the Office for Bombing Prevention, to address terrorist explosive threats, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4749

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 "National Bombing Prevention Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. BOMBING PREVENTION.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Subtitle A of title II of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 121 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 210F. OFFICE FOR BOMBING PREVENTION.

"(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Secretary shall establish within the Protective Security Coordination Division of the Office of Infrastructure Protection of the Department an Office for Bombing Prevention (in this section referred to as 'the Office').

"(b) *RESPONSIBILITIES.*—The Office shall have the primary responsibility for enhancing the ability, and coordinating the efforts, of the United States to deter, detect, prevent, protect against, and respond to terrorist explosive attacks in the United States, including by—

"(1) serving as the lead agency of the Department for ensuring that programs designed to counter terrorist explosive attacks in the United States function together efficiently to meet the evolving threat from explosives and improvised explosive devices;

"(2) coordinating national and intergovernmental bombing prevention activities to ensure those activities work toward achieving common national goals;

"(3) conducting analysis of the capabilities and requirements necessary for Federal, State, local, and tribal governments to deter, prevent, detect, protect against, and assist in any response to terrorist explosive attacks in the United States by—

"(A) maintaining a national analysis database on the capabilities of bomb squads, explosive detection canine teams, tactics teams, and public safety dive teams; and

"(B) applying the analysis derived from the database described in subparagraph (A) in—

"(i) evaluating progress toward closing identified gaps relating to national strategic goals and standards; and

"(ii) informing decisions relating to homeland security policy, assistance, training, research, development efforts, testing and evaluation, and related requirements;

"(4) promoting secure information sharing of sensitive material and promoting security awareness, including by—

"(A) operating and maintaining a secure information sharing system that allows the sharing of critical information relating to terrorist