

Pursuant to the defense, the acts of a public officer performed under color of authority are considered valid and immune from collateral attack. Born of policy and necessity, the defense protects the interests and reasonable expectations of the public who must rely on the presumptively valid acts of public officials.

In closing, we must enact S. 3295 much sooner rather than later to avert a potential litigation crisis that would prove wasteful, unnecessary, and unfair.

S. 3295 does provide a measure of immunity. Congress clearly has the authority to do so. And today, we have the responsibility to quickly move S. 3295.

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, the bill also makes a technical change to insert the term "deputy director," the term in current use, in place of "deputy commissioner," an outdated term mistakenly used in the 2002 bill. Because related terms no longer appear in the underlying statute, this change could not be properly executed in the 2002 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 Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 3295.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

SUPPORTING NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1324) requesting that the President focus appropriate attention on neighborhood crime prevention and community policing, and coordinate certain Federal efforts to participate in National Night Out, which occurs the first Tuesday of August each year, including by supporting local efforts and community watch groups and by supporting local officials, to promote community safety and help provide homeland security.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1324

Whereas neighborhood crime is of continuing concern to the American people;

Whereas child safety is a growing concern for parents and communities, as evidenced by several cases of missing and abducted children;

Whereas homeland security remains an important priority for communities and the Nation;

Whereas crime, drugs, and violence in schools is of continuing concern to the American people due to the recent high-profile incidents that have resulted in fatalities at several schools in the United States;

Whereas the fight against neighborhood crime requires people to work together in cooperation with law enforcement personnel;

Whereas neighborhood crime watch organizations effectively promote awareness about, and the participation of volunteers in, crime prevention activities at the local level;

Whereas neighborhood crime watch groups can contribute to the Nation's war on drugs by helping to prevent communities from becoming markets for drug dealers;

Whereas neighborhood crime watch programs play an integral role in combating domestic terrorism by increasing vigilance and awareness and encouraging citizen participation in community safety and homeland security;

Whereas community-based programs involving law enforcement, school administrators, teachers, parents, and local communities work effectively to reduce school violence and crime and promote the safety of children;

Whereas citizens throughout the United States will take part in National Night Out, a unique crime prevention event that will demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of community participation in crime prevention efforts;

Whereas over 35,400,000 people in more than 11,130 communities from all 50 States, territories, District of Columbia, and military bases worldwide participated in National Night Out in 2007;

Whereas National Night Out will celebrate its 25th anniversary on Tuesday, August 5, 2008, when citizens, businesses, local law enforcement officers, mayors, State and Federal officials, and others will celebrate "America's Night Out Against Crime" and participate in events to support community crime prevention;

Whereas National Night Out is supporting the Department of Homeland Security's Ready campaign by handing out materials and educating and empowering the public on how to prepare for, and respond to, potential terrorist attacks or other emergencies;

Whereas National Night Out is supporting the National Child Identification Program, a joint partnership between the American Football Coaches Association and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to provide identification kits to parents to help locate missing children;

Whereas the National Sheriffs Association, the United States Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities have officially expressed support for National Night Out; and

Whereas citizens and communities that participate on August 5, 2008, will send a positive message to other communities and the Nation, showing their commitment to reduce crime and promote homeland security: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Night Out; and

(2) requests that the President—

(A) issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to conduct appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs to demonstrate support for National Night Out;

(B) focus appropriate attention on neighborhood crime prevention, community policing, and reduction of school crime by delivering speeches, convening meetings, and directing the Administration to make crime reduction an important priority; and

(C) coordinate the efforts of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the USA Freedom Corps, the Citizen Corps, the National Senior Service Corps, and AmeriCorps to participate in National Night Out by supporting local efforts and neighborhood watches and by supporting local officials, including law enforcement personnel, to provide homeland security and combat terrorism in the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) and the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 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 Tennessee?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 1324, which will press the President to focus appropriate attention on neighborhood crime prevention and community policing. The resolution also asks the President to coordinate certain Federal efforts to participate in National Night Out.

Neighborhood crime is a major concern for many Americans across our Nation. While our police departments are generally as professional and responsive as they can be, preventing neighborhood crimes comes from the efforts of us all.

Community-based programs involving law enforcement, school administrators, teachers, parents, and other citizens are among the most effective ways to reduce violence and crime in our neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Crime Watch groups and Citizens on Patrol groups, for example, can be an integral part of a police department's effectiveness in making our neighborhoods safe. The presence of concerned citizens walking their neighborhoods, in contact with police, help prevent communities from becoming targets for drug dealers. Just as patrol is the great deterrent that police use, patrol can be a deterrent that citizens use. With more potential witnesses on the streets, citizens are much less likely to be robbery victims.

National Night Out is a unique crime prevention event that helps to highlight the importance and effectiveness of community participation in crime prevention efforts. This special event allows citizens, businesses, and local law enforcement officers, along with Federal, State and local officials, to participate in community crime prevention programs.

Last year, more than 35 million people in more than 11,000 communities across America participated in National Night Out. This year marks the 25th anniversary of this special event.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. STUPAK for leadership on this issue. And I ask my colleagues to support National Night Out.

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

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself so much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, on August 5, 2008, thousands of communities and millions of individuals will once again participate in National Night Out. It's an annual event created to raise community awareness of and participation in local crime-fighting programs and organizations.

H. Res. 1324 calls on the administration to coordinate Federal efforts to participate in this nation-wide campaign as well as other community crime-prevention initiatives.

In 1984, the National Association of Town Watch, NATW, decided the 5 to 7 percent of neighborhood residents actively involved in their local crime watch and prevention programs was just not enough. It was out of that concern that a National Night Out was born. Since then, it has been the mission of the National Association of Town Watch and National Night Out to promote and increase the membership of these local crime-fighting initiatives and organizations, to strengthen police community relationships, and to send a message to criminals that neighborhoods and communities are united in their fight against crime.

This year's event will celebrate a National Night Out's 25th anniversary. Since its creation, the event, which began with 2.5 million Americans in 23 States illuminating their homes, has expanded its participation to 35.4 million in all 50 States. And the traditional "lights on" has grown to include block parties, neighborhood walks, police meetings, cookouts, and parades.

Unfortunately, crime has found its way into even the safest of neighborhoods. And while our law enforcement officials play a tremendous role in fighting this criminal activity, united communities committed to crime-prevention awareness is essential to this ongoing fight.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

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

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, National Night Out is a crime prevention event that brings awareness to neighborhood crime. The idea is that people will come out of their homes, meet with their neighbors, and become more aware of issues in their community, especially crime concerns.

When people know each other that live around them, they are more apt to work together to prevent crime in their communities. Unfortunately, Americans today don't know their neighbors like they used to. My grandmother used to say that "we quit knowing our neighbors when they quit building front porches on houses." Maybe there's some truth to that statement, Mr. Speaker, because not many people go and visit their neighbors, sit on the porch, and discuss important events like what's taking place in their community.

National Night Out allows neighbors to get together with their kids. Back home in Texas, some communities block off streets, eat barbecue and hot dogs, and invite the local police over to meet with the kids and the neighbors that they protect.

A neighborhood that has visible neighbors is a safer neighborhood. On National Night Out in August, there will be less burglaries, car thefts and vandalism because neighbors will be with other neighbors on watch, protecting the neighborhoods they call home.

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

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself so much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the remarks made by the gentleman that came to the floor. As I listened to Mr. POE and his remarks, I come from an entirely different environment. I do a little inventory, and within a mile radius of my house there are four houses, and that's all, perhaps, in limit of a mile. Not only do we know who drives down our road and where they're going, if the ambulance comes by, we know who's in it. It's a very thinly populated rural area, but we have a neighborhood.

And when I come to Washington, D.C., where my wife and I maintain a residence, we live in a neighborhood. And neighborhoods are similar whether they're in the city or whether they're in the country because you need to get to know each other. And a National Night Out is a way to do that. And when we get to know each other, that opens up our communications. And when we open up our communications, we provide the intelligence that supports our law enforcement so that we can fight crime in a direct effective fashion. That's the essence of the reason that I support this resolution, and I urge its adoption.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Stupak/Ramstad resolution, House Resolution 1324. Our resolution would commemorate the 25th annual National Night Out event, which is sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch.

I would like to thank my Law Enforcement Caucus Co-Chair, Congressman JIM RAMSTAD, for introducing this legislation with me once again this year, and all members of the Law Enforcement Caucus who co-sponsored this resolution.

This bipartisan resolution has had strong Congressional support for several years running and I am pleased we have another opportunity to highlight this important event again this year.

National Night Out, an annual nationwide grassroots crime prevention event, will take place on Tuesday, August 5th.

The event brings together involved citizens, law enforcement agencies, and civic groups throughout the United States to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness and to strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships.

Since its inception in 1984, National Night Out has become a crime prevention fixture that is enthusiastically supported by citizens, law enforcement and local officials.

It is the Nation's largest, most cost-effective crime prevention campaign. By building community watch groups and police partnerships at an average cost of about \$27 per community, National Night Out allows local law enforcement to extend its reach without incurring additional costs.

Whether it is stopping illegal drug sales, making schools safer, locating missing children, or remaining vigilant against terrorism, local law enforcement officials depend on the support of community networks to succeed.

The active involvement of citizens and the presence of local law enforcement in communities is a winning combination that makes and keeps neighborhoods safe.

Last year's National Night Out campaign involved citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials from over 11,130 communities in all 50 states, U.S. territories, the District of Columbia, and on U.S. military bases worldwide.

In all, over 35.4 million people participated in National Night Out 2007.

National Night Out is an integral part of America's grassroots efforts to fight crime and create safer neighborhoods.

The Stupak/Ramstad resolution expresses Congress' support for community crime prevention and asks that the President focus Federal attention on the issue.

With this in mind, we hope that you will show your support for the community crime prevention efforts of citizens and police in your district, and across the Nation.

Vote for the Stupak/Ramstad National Night Out Resolution.

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

Mr. COHEN. 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 Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1324.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further

proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

UNITED STATES PAROLE COMMISSION EXTENSION ACT OF 2008

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 3294) to provide for the continued performance of the functions of the United States Parole Commission.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 3294

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 "United States Parole Commission Extension Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT OF SENTENCING REFORM ACT OF 1984.

For purposes of section 235(b) of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984 (18 U.S.C. 3551 note; Public Law 98-473; 98 Stat. 2032), as such section relates to chapter 311 of title 18, United States Code, and the United States Parole Commission, each reference in such section to "21 years" or "21-year period" shall be deemed a reference to "24 years" or "24-year period", respectively.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) and the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 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 gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, S. 3294, the United States Parole Commission Extension Act of 2008, would authorize the United States Parole Commission for another 3 years.

Under the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984, criminal defendants sentenced for Federal offenses committed on or after November 1, 1987 serve determinate terms and are not eligible for patrol.

Since the elimination of Federal parole in 1987, the Parole Commission has been reauthorized on four prior occasions. Current reauthorization is set to expire October 31, 2008.

The Commission has jurisdiction over Federal offenders sentenced before November 1, 1987, as well as DC offenders sentenced before August 4, 2000. The Commission also has jurisdiction over an increasing number of DC offenders on supervised release.

Should the Commission not be reauthorized, the Department of Justice is

concerned that Federal inmates who were sentenced prior to 1987 will begin to file motions for release under the Sentencing Reform Act. This act requires inmates sentenced before 1987 to be given release dates 3 to 6 months prior to the Commission's expiration. This is why it's imperative that Congress act immediately to reauthorize the Parole Commission.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself so much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 3294, the United States Parole Commission Extension Act of 2008.

This bipartisan legislation will extend the authorization of the United States Parole Commission for an additional 3 years.

Judiciary Committee Chairman JOHN CONYERS and Ranking Member LAMAR SMITH introduced the House version of this bill earlier this month. Crime Subcommittee Chairman BOBBY SCOTT and Ranking Member LOUIE GOHMERT also joined as cosponsors.

The Parole Commission is an independent agency within the Department of Justice that has the responsibility of supervising Federal offenders that are eligible for parole. The Parole Commission also has jurisdiction over offenders from the District of Columbia who are parole-eligible and those convicted under current DC law, under which they cannot be paroled.

Today, the great majority of the Commission's workload concerns the District of Columbia offenders. That's because the group of offenders that the Commission was originally intended to supervise—Federal offenders that are eligible for parole—are a small category of prisoners getting smaller every day. This decrease in the number of parole-eligible Federal offenders is the result of a decision by Congress to end indeterminate sentencing, and therefore Federal parole, with the passage of the Sentencing Reform Act, or SRA, of 1984.

As a result of the SRA, the arbitrary and disparate sentences imposed by judges under the old system were replaced with determinate sentences mandated by strong guidelines created by the U.S. Sentencing Commission. This new Federal sentencing arrangement has been an unquestioned success. Determinate sentencing makes incarceration terms more meaningful and ensures that offenders actually serve most of their sentences. Determinate sentencing also helped to restore the credibility of courts by making sentencing more uniform.

Over the last 25 years the national crime rate has dropped. This decrease in crime can be attributed to determinate sentencing, which keeps the violent criminals in prison and off the streets, and it also provides a deterrent.

In an effort to lower local crime rates, the District of Columbia fol-

lowed the Federal example and abolished parole. Under the new DC system, the DC Superior Court imposes a term of incarceration and supervised release, and the Parole Commission enforces the conditions of the supervised release.

Like the population of Federal offenders eligible for parole, the parole-eligible DC offender population is declining over time, although at a slower rate than Federal offenders.

□ 1630

However, because all incoming offenders are now sentenced under the new law, the DC supervised release offender population is increasing over time.

The Department of Justice has indicated that it will evaluate the future of the commission during the 3-year reauthorization period. The department will review whether any changes to the commission are necessary to reflect its decreasing Federal parole responsibilities and its evolving supervised release responsibilities for the District of Columbia. These changes may include transferring all or some of the commission's functions to an entity or entities inside or outside the Department of Justice.

We hope the department will share the results of this review with Congress as it will help the legislature make an informed decision about the future status of the U.S. Parole Commission.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. COHEN. 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 Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 3294.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

DRUG TRAFFICKING VESSEL INTERDICTION ACT OF 2008

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6295) to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit operation by any means or embarking in any submersible or semi-submersible vessel that is without nationality and that is navigating or has navigated into, through or from waters beyond the