

Throughout my career I have taken steps to not only ensure increased EAS funding, but to ensure on-time regularly scheduled air service is a priority for small communities, as well as large communities.

My March 8, 2010, letter to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, with signed support from Chairman OBERSTAR and Subcommittee Chairman COSTELLO, requests an investigation into delays and cancellations in small communities. This request initiates the process of narrowing down what changes we can make to increase air service reliability at our rural airports. The FAA Air Transportation Modernization and Safety Improvement Act renews our commitment to the Essential Air Service program.

As the Representative elected nearly 34 years ago by the great people of southern West Virginia, I know just how crucial EAS is to the survival of many rural airports.

The last FAA reauthorization bill made the Small Community Air Service Development, SCASD, Program a permanent program and increased authorized EAS funding to ensure the continuation of air service for rural businesses and residents that otherwise would find local air service too expensive.

This bill today improves our commitment to rural communities, brings stability to rural air service and encourages small communities to build relationships with air carriers that serve them. As importantly, this bill increases the authorized funding level for Essential Air Service, EAS, from \$127 million to \$200 million per year through FY 2012 and extends the Small Community Air Services Development, SCASD, program through FY 2012 at the current authorized funding level of \$35 million per year.

Airports have a vital role in our communities serving as both direct and indirect employers of our citizens—from the aircraft mechanics and airport managers who support the safety and on-time performance of flights, to the cooks and custodians who provide comfort and convenience for weary travelers.

Airports attract business development to communities and ensure local businesses remain robust and have opportunity for growth. For these reasons and more, businesses are drawn to those communities that can boast of a strong local airport.

To stay competitive in an ever-changing global marketplace, airports are constantly faced with pressures to modernize their operations. Often, local communities take it upon themselves to come up with the necessary funds and make improvements themselves. That is a crucial, and often difficult, goal.

Essential Air Service funding can make the difference between a community having access to aviation or not. The program has kept many airports operational and, in many cases, made lasting improvements to the services offered.

We must take it upon ourselves to do more to ensure that local airports, like the ones in my State of West Virginia, can continue to operate and provide much needed air service and jobs.

In closing, I just want to reiterate my strong belief that the EAS program provides rural areas with a vital link to our national air transportation system and promotes business development in our local communities.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the FAA Air Transportation Moderniza-

tion and Safety Act. This important legislation will modernize our air traffic control systems, improve safety, and protect passenger rights.

This bill will provide historic funding levels to improve airports, streamline operations, and update our air traffic control system to make it safer and more efficient. It strengthens air carrier oversight and revises training requirements to ensure that all the pilots in the cockpit have the most advanced certification. Finally, it provides vital consumer protections to make sure that when there are long delays on the tarmac, passengers have the option to leave the plane.

I hope my colleagues will join me to support this bill and that we move quickly to reconcile differences with the Senate and enact this much-needed legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XIX, further consideration of the motion will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR BANGLADESH'S RETURN TO DEMOCRACY

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1215) expressing support for Bangladesh's return to democracy, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1215

Whereas March 26 is the anniversary of Bangladesh's independence;

Whereas the Constitution of Bangladesh, ratified in 1972 following a war of independence, established a democracy ruled by and for the people of Bangladesh;

Whereas Bangladesh has a population of approximately 160,000,000 people, is the world's fourth most populated Muslim country, and is a moderate and democratic Muslim nation;

Whereas before elections in December 2008, Bangladesh held what the international community viewed as three free and fair elections in 1991, 1996, and 2001, respectively;

Whereas in October 2006, power was handed over to a caretaker government before the January 22, 2007, scheduled election and the caretaker government subsequently imposed a state of emergency on January 11, 2007;

Whereas the United States House of Representatives passed a resolution in September 2008 calling for the return of democracy in Bangladesh;

Whereas the caretaker government of Bangladesh returned the country to democracy through an election held on December 29, 2008;

Whereas the December 29, 2008, election was monitored by numerous international election observers that declared the election credible;

Whereas the United States Department of State welcomed "the success of Bangladesh's parliamentary elections" and congratulated the "Bangladesh Election Commission and the thousands of government officials involved in organizing this successful election";

Whereas the Awami League, led by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed, won over two-thirds of the 300 seats in Parliament and formed a new government in January 2009;

Whereas President Barack Obama awarded Muhammad Yunus the Presidential Medal of Freedom in August 2009;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development reports that 49 percent of Bangladeshis live below the poverty line;

Whereas Bangladesh's economy grew at an estimated rate of 5.7 percent in 2009;

Whereas the Anti-Corruption Commission in Bangladesh has commenced serious efforts to address corruption; and

Whereas Bangladesh's long-term political stability and economic progress are critical to the security of the South Asian region: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its strong support for the people of Bangladesh;

(2) encourages the strengthening and consolidation of democracy in Bangladesh one year after the election;

(3) urges the Government of Bangladesh to work together with all political leaders to continue and deepen reconciliation;

(4) appreciates the Government of Bangladesh for making progress in meeting the selection criteria of the Millennium Challenge Corporation;

(5) urges the Government of Bangladesh to protect the rights of religious and ethnic minorities in Bangladesh, including the Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Ahmadis, and non-Muslim tribal peoples;

(6) urges the Anti-Corruption Commission in Bangladesh to continue its efforts to eradicate corruption;

(7) urges the Secretary of State to coordinate with Bangladesh on matters pertaining to security, economic progress, and human rights in South Asia; and

(8) encourages the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to continue supporting the building of a strong civil society and eradicating poverty in Bangladesh.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CROWLEY. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of House Resolution 1215, a measure to honor Bangladesh's return to democracy. I'd like to thank the chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, Chairman BERMAN, and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their support of this resolution. I'd also like to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) for leading this effort with me, along with other members of the House Caucus on Bangladesh.

Just 18 months ago, this House passed a resolution urging a return to democracy in Bangladesh. At the time, we were concerned that Bangladesh was creeping toward totalitarianism and authoritarianism, especially after the ruling caretaker government postponed national elections. The 160 million people of Bangladesh faced an uncertain future.

Instead of succumbing to the temptations of permanent power, the caretaker government ultimately scheduled nationwide elections. They invited international election monitors into the country and created an independent anticorruption commission. The elections were deemed credible by numerous international observers, and, most importantly, by the people of Bangladesh.

Today, the day before Bangladesh celebrates their Independence Day, it is an opportunity for this House to honor the Bangladesh people and their democracy. Bangladesh has made important strides towards reaching the qualification requirements of the Millennium Challenge Corporation. It has taken steps to create a path into government for women, and, not least, the Bangladeshis have worked very hard to fight extremism.

Bangladesh has become an important partner of the United States. Even as it faces challenges with serious poverty, threats from climate change, and extremism, the Bangladeshi people have shown remarkable resilience, creativity, and principle. This is exactly the kind of country the United States ought to work with and do more to support, not because the situation on the ground is perfect, but because by working together we have clearly created a better path forward.

In the coming months, I hope the Bangladeshi authorities will make every possible effort to deepen and strengthen political reconciliation within their country. I also hope the Bangladeshi people and their government will work with us to identify stronger mechanisms to improve assistance and protection for refugees fleeing from neighboring countries. Inside Bangladesh, the protection of minorities must remain a high priority for its government. At the same time, I hope the international community will more quickly wake up to the positive changes Bangladesh has made thus far.

The fact is, Bangladesh is a moderate Muslim nation of 160 million people that wants to work with the United

States of America. I hope that our government can find more ways to work alongside Bangladesh to support good governance, human rights, and development. There's clearly much more that we can do to work together.

For today, though, we honor Bangladesh, the Bangladeshi people, and the many hardworking Bangladeshi Americans on their national day, a day that I know that they treasure. As an independent, moderate, and democratic nation, Bangladesh deserves no less.

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H. Res. 1215, a measure expressing the support of the American people for Bangladesh's return to democracy.

Mr. Speaker, the United States and Bangladesh have been friends for more than a half a century. We have worked together to build a strong and lasting democracy. The United States welcomed the free, fair, and transparent elections that occurred in December 2008. The United States is proud to have supported that effort, and we will continue to support efforts to improve and promote development, democracy, social harmony, and mutual tolerance.

The United States attaches a great importance to South Asia. In this context, the good news coming out of Bangladesh related to democratic development, economic progress, and rejection of violent extremism. All of this is being strongly welcomed in Washington. In this regard, we are all pleased that ties between our two countries continue to deepen. Our two governments are working closely to address global challenges, including climate change, food security, terrorism, and pandemic disease.

I would particularly like to highlight longstanding U.S. efforts to empower women at the grassroots level, including through helping local governments be more transparent and accountable to the Bangladeshi people. Meanwhile, the growing voice of the Bangladeshi American community in Arkansas and elsewhere around the country is helping to strengthen and extend people-to-people ties between our two vibrant societies.

In conclusion, I support the adoption of the resolution.

Having no further speakers, I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arkansas for his being here in support of this resolution and the minority for supporting this resolution and the timely manner in which you allowed this to come to the floor. I appreciate it tremendously. I know all the members of the Bangladeshi Caucus appreciate it as well.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to visit Bangladesh on several occasions, and I have tremendous respect for the people of Bangladesh. They're hardworking, good people, and

they love America. It's amazing the outpouring of affection that I experience when I go to that country.

I also want to say that post-9/11, on my first visit to Bangladesh, the desire for the Bangladeshi people to strengthen the ties between our two nations was palpable then. I know in this new government, the post-caretaker government, it is as strong today as it was after 9/11. And for a country of 160 million Muslim people with a considerable minority population within that population, as well, of Hindu and Christian and other religions, that bond between our nations is as strong as ever. I also recognize that not everything is perfect in Bangladesh and that they're working towards making it a stronger and a better democracy for its people, but also for the region in which Bangladesh lies.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that, I just want to thank, again, the minority for this opportunity to congratulate Bangladesh as they celebrate their Independence Day, and the people of Bangladesh and Bangladeshi Americans who hold very dear March 26 as Bangladeshi Independence Day.

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 New York (Mr. CROWLEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1215, as amended.

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. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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.

EXTENDING THE SMALL BUSINESS LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4938) to permit the use of previously appropriated funds to extend the Small Business Loan Guarantee Program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4938

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF SMALL BUSINESS LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUNDS.—Up to \$40,000,000 of the amount made available under the heading "Small Business Administration—Business Loans Program Account" in title V of division C of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111-117) also may be utilized for fee reductions and eliminations under section 501 of title V of division A of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5) and for the cost of guaranteed loans under