

For many children, a positive permanent outcome can be found in reunification with their biological parents, or adoption into a new family.

However, far too many children languish for years without getting the help and love they deserve from permanent families. In 2008 over 10% of children leaving foster care, nearly 30,000 children, did so through emancipation and without the family support they deserve.

Equally alarming, for 2008 the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System estimated that there were 1,740 child fatalities resulting from abuse or neglect. This is simply unacceptable.

With the passage of the 2008 Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, Congress made a significant commitment to reforming our nation's foster care system, giving states and families new tools to cut down on the amount of time that kids spend in foster care and more opportunities to find permanent homes. Yet, more can and should be done to make the system work for foster children.

I am pleased that we are taking the opportunity today to discuss the pressing needs of our foster care system. Children in foster care deserve our unwavering support. We must redouble our efforts to find them permanent families and until then, ensure their safety while in our care.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, the number of children in foster care continues to rise in the United States. The current population exceeds 500,000 children. Most of these children are placed into foster care due to parental abuse or neglect making them vulnerable to adverse situations and negative social outcomes. Luckily, the foster care system serves as a safety net for our most vulnerable children. Therefore, both children and parents of the foster care system rely and depend on Congress to improve permanency and support systems for them.

Even though children who enter foster care remain in care for an average of thirty months many of them spend the majority of their childhood being placed from family to family. Without a permanent family, frequent moves from home-to-home and school-to-school creates a difficult level of instability to recover from. As a result, children face poor academic performance and higher rates of grade retention, absenteeism, tardiness, truancy, and dropout. Moreover, those that age out of the system do so without the necessary educational and job training skills. Quite naturally, these factors contribute to the risk of emotional and behavioral problems that lead to very negative future outcomes later in life. Therefore, it is necessary that Congress promotes the safety and well being of children placed into foster care.

I want to acknowledge all the individuals—including, foster parents, community advocates, mentors, and others—in the child welfare workforce for their dedication and commitment to improving outcomes for children placed into foster care.

I support H. Res. 1339 and hope that the month of May be designated as National Foster Care Month to provide an opportunity to acknowledge the accomplishments of the child welfare workforce, foster parents, advocacy community, and mentors and the positive impact they have on children's lives. I encourage my colleagues to support the resolution.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1339.

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. McDERMOTT. Madam 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.

#### EXTENDING IMMUNITIES TO THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND THE INTERNATIONAL CIVILIAN OFFICE IN KOSOVO ACT OF 2010

Mr. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5139) to provide for the International Organizations Immunities Act to be extended to the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the International Civilian Office in Kosovo, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5139

*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 "Extending Immunities to the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the International Civilian Office in Kosovo Act of 2010".

#### SEC. 2. AUTHORITY TO EXTEND THE PROVISIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IMMUNITIES ACT TO THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND THE INTERNATIONAL CIVILIAN OFFICE IN KOSOVO.

The International Organizations Immunities Act (22 U.S.C. 288 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 17. The provisions of this title may be extended to the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina (and to its officers and employees) or the International Civilian Office in Kosovo (and to its officers and employees) in the same manner, to the same extent, and subject to the same conditions, as such provisions may be extended to a public international organization in which the United States participates pursuant to any treaty or under the authority of any Act of Congress authorizing such participation or making an appropriation for such participation. Any such extension may provide for the provisions of this title to continue to extend to the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina (and to its officers and employees) or the International Civilian Office in Kosovo (and to its officers and employees) after that Office has been dissolved."

#### SEC. 3. BUDGET COMPLIANCE.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. McMAHON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in strong support of this bill that provides legal protection for U.S. personnel working in two Balkans-based organizations.

I wish to thank my good friend from California and the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative HOWARD BERMAN, for introducing this important measure.

The Office of the High Representative, or OHR, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the International Civilian Office, the ICO, in Kosovo arose out of efforts by the international community, with the United States' leadership, to bring peace and stability to the Balkans following the conflicts in the 1990s.

The OHR has been performing an invaluable function in overseeing the civilian implementation of the Dayton Accords, while the ICO has been ensuring implementation of provisions of the Comprehensive Proposal of the Kosovo Status Settlement. Over 200 Americans have worked at these organizations.

H.R. 5139 amends the International Organizations and Immunities Act, or the IOIA, by authorizing the President to extend privileges and immunities to the officers and employees of the OHR and ICO.

This technical fix seeks to help avoid costly and politically sensitive litigation in the United States' courts against employees of these organizations who are not otherwise guaranteed immunity under the IOIA.

Unlike typical international organizations designated under the IOIA, neither the OHR nor the ICO is intended to endure beyond a limited timeframe necessary for implementing their mandates. Thus, H.R. 5139 enables the President to extend the privileges and immunities after these bodies are dissolved, since even then litigation may

be brought against former employees or for records of the organization.

It is of utmost importance that the United States Government protects its diplomats who serve in international organizations, often at great personal risk and sacrifice, from financial and personal ruinous litigation. In addition, we must preserve our ability to use informal institutions to conduct foreign policy and attract qualified personnel.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5139.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 5139.

The Office of High Representative in Bosnia and the International Civilian Office in Kosovo were established to help promote stable, multiethnic democratic governance in those countries in the aftermath of the vicious warfare they suffered throughout the 1990s.

The United States has supported these missions and assigned American diplomats to help them with critical expert advice. Regrettably, these American diplomats could now face costly, politically motivated nuisance lawsuits based on their actions in the course of their official duties while helping those organizations and those nations.

For other international organizations in which the United States participates by treaty or by an act of this Congress, the President may freely extend immunity from such lawsuits to officers and employees under the International Organization Immunities Act. However, due to the ad hoc nature of their establishment, these two offices are not automatically covered by this law. This brief bill seeks to rectify the issue by allowing the President to extend those privileges and immunities to those organizations and their employees.

Congress has similarly amended the IOIA to extend immunities to other organizations falling in similar gray areas, such as the European Space Agency, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, among just a few.

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These immunities are not nearly as broad as the personal immunity enjoyed by foreign diplomats in the United States, but will insulate our officers from suit only for their official actions as employees of those organizations, and may be revoked by the President at any time. I'm pleased to support the passage of this measure, which represents a bipartisan text that was worked out with the Department of State and with our Senate colleagues.

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

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5139.

I strongly support this needed legislation which extends the diplomatic protections granted under the International Organizations and Immunities Act (IOIA) to employees of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the International Civilian Office (ICO) in Kosovo. The OHR and ICO have been critical institutions for fostering peace and stability in Bosnia and Kosovo, but due to their unique ad hoc structure, the employees of these institutions are at risk of litigation related to the carrying out of their official duties.

This is unacceptable. Other similar institutions have been extended IOIA protections, and we must bring the OHR and ICO under the IOIA umbrella. Acting on this issue in a timely manner is especially important as neither the OHR nor ICO is intended to endure beyond a limited time frame necessary for the implementation of their mandate.

The hard working men and women at the OHR and ICO have worked tirelessly, often at great personal sacrifice, to promote peace in the region. This is especially apparent with respect to their efforts to root out corruption and to freeze assets used by war criminals.

Unfortunately, obstructionist political elements in the region have been all too vocal regarding their intent to take legal action against employees of the OHR and ICO. It is unacceptable that OHR and ICO employees could face potential lawsuits for their official actions carried out with the express purpose of furthering core United States foreign policy objectives.

The bill before us takes the necessary step of bringing the OHR and ICO under the IOIA, and grants well deserved protections to those working to bring peace and stability to the countries of Bosnia and Kosovo. Please support this resolution.

Mr. MCMAHON. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and 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. MCMAHON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5139, 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.

#### EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES TO CHINA FOR TRAGIC EARTHQUAKE IN QINGHAI PROVINCE

Mr. MCMAHON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1324) expressing condolences and sympathies for the people of China following the tragic earthquake in the Qinghai province of the Peoples Republic of China on April 14, 2010.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1324

Whereas, on April 14, 2010, an earthquake measuring 6.9 on the Richter scale struck the Qinghai province of southwest China;

Whereas the China Earthquake Networks Administration confirmed the earthquake struck in Yushu County, a remote and mountainous area sparsely populated by farmers and herdsman;

Whereas the population of Yushu County is overwhelmingly poor, with rural residents earning an average of \$342 a year, largely from agriculture;

Whereas at least 18 aftershocks measuring more than 6.0 on the Richter scale followed the quake throughout the day in the seismically active zone;

Whereas over 2,000 people have been killed and over 10,000 injured, numbers that are feared to climb;

Whereas an unknown number of individuals remain buried in debris as soldiers work around the clock to dig them out by hand;

Whereas at least 40 people remain trapped under a collapsed office building that houses the local Departments of Commerce and Industry of the Peoples Republic of China and many children and young adults still lie beneath the rubble of collapsed primary and vocational schools;

Whereas officials expect the death toll will rise because rescue efforts are stymied by a lack of heavy equipment and the mountainous terrain;

Whereas medical supplies and tents are also in short supply;

Whereas China Central Television and the Red Cross Society of China estimate that 90 percent of homes and 70 percent of schools in the region have been destroyed;

Whereas the region that includes Yushu County is located on the Tibetan plateau, and many villages sit well above 16,000 feet, with freezing temperatures not uncommon in mid-April;

Whereas by the evening of April 14, 2010, temperatures in the county seat had already reached 27 degrees Fahrenheit;

Whereas thousands of Tibetan monks, many of whom traveled long distances from other Tibetan areas, have played a vital role in relief efforts, providing food and assistance, and tending to the basic and spiritual needs of the victims;

Whereas in order to prevent a flood, workers are racing to release water from a reservoir in the disaster area after discovering that a crack had formed in the dam due to the earthquake;

Whereas many survivors have already fled to the surrounding mountains, amid fears that a nearby dam could be ruptured by the aftershocks hitting the area;

Whereas news media reported that 700 paramilitary officers are already working in the quake zone and that more than 4,000 others will be sent to assist in search and rescue efforts;

Whereas the Civil Affairs Ministry said it would also send 5,000 tents and 100,000 coats and blankets; and

Whereas the international community is sending much needed supplies and supporting local Chinese relief efforts: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its deepest condolences and sympathies for the loss of life and the physical and psychological damage caused by the earthquake of April 14, 2010;

(2) expresses solidarity with the people of the Qinghai province, Tibetan-Americans, Chinese-Americans, and all those who have lost loved ones or have otherwise been affected by the tragedy, including rescue and humanitarian workers;

(3) reaffirms the United States pledge, issued by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, to stand ready to assist the people of China during this difficult period; and