

cartels and held for ransom. The family here in the United States, in Texas, paid the ransom to get the two cousins back. The drug cartels, the Zetas, they murdered them anyway.

So we have the problem of kidnappings taking place; we have the problem of extortion; and we have the problem of cross-border crime—but it is all because of the fact that the border needs to be more secure than it is. A plan is a good idea. A plan to actually address all of these issues of a porous border is something that's long overdue, but I'm glad to see that we're moving in that direction—to have a plan so that we know exactly what will take place and how we will protect our borders.

After all, the job of the Federal Government is to protect the national security.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. In closing, I thank the lead sponsor of this bill, the gentlewoman from Michigan, Representative MILLER, for her leadership on border and maritime issues and for her willingness to work on a bipartisan basis in areas of shared concern. I support the bill.

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

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, devising a comprehensive plan to secure our Nation's borders is the first step on the road to a more secure homeland. This bipartisan bill is a good start, and I ask my colleagues to support its passage.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of H.R. 1299, the Secure Border Act of 2011, authored by my good friend, CANDICE MILLER, and urge my colleagues to support it.

This bill requires the Department of Homeland Security to develop a comprehensive strategy for gaining control of our borders at all ports of entry. In developing that strategy, an analysis of current security effectiveness will help define the needs and requirements of an implementable border security blueprint.

Mr. Speaker, the reason this is necessary is because illegal immigration is one of the biggest crises facing our nation and securing our borders is of paramount importance.

The Government Accountability Office recently reported that less than half of our southwest border is under operational control. At the same time, only 32 percent of our northern border operates at an "acceptable" security level.

Mr. Speaker, keeping our nation safe is the federal government's chief responsibility, and that's why it is so important that we pass this legislation.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1299, 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.

APPLICABILITY OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT TO THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3670) to require the Transportation Security Administration to comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3670

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

SECTION 1. APPLICABILITY OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT TO THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 111(d) of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (49 U.S.C. 44935 note; Public Law 107-71) is amended—

(1) by striking "Notwithstanding" and inserting the following:

"(1) GENERAL AUTHORITY.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), and notwithstanding"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) UNIFORMED SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT.—In carrying out the functions authorized under paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall be subject to the provisions set forth in chapter 43 of title 38, United States Code."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

□ 1800

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any 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. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I will say again to the ranking member that this is a very vital bill. In the interest of time, because we still have this and three other pieces of legislation to pass in the next half hour, I will limit my remarks other than to say that the gentleman from Minnesota deserves tremendous credit for this bill.

H.R. 3670 is absolutely vital. It's necessary. It would guarantee that TSA

employees who are called to active duty would keep their jobs when they come home and would further ensure that existing protections could not be in any way changed by potentially conflicting rules or regulations.

I also want to commend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), who was the original cosponsor of this bill.

And, again, I just want to say with reference to my friend from Minnesota, he has dedicated a life of service to his country in the military, and he's continuing that outstanding service here in the United States Congress.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3670, sponsored by the gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. WALZ.

This bipartisan bill addresses a fundamental gap in the protection of veterans' employment rights, which could easily be remedied.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of my good friend from Florida, Congressman BILIRAKIS, Chairman of the Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications Subcommittee, for his work on this issue and for being an original cosponsor of the bill.

Veterans make up roughly 20 percent of TSA's workforce. This bill simply requires TSA to comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, or USERRA. This would guarantee that TSA employees who are called to active duty could keep their jobs when they come home.

In recent testimony submitted for the record to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, TSA stated that its current practice already conforms to the requirements of H.R. 3670. This bill would simply ensure existing protections could not be changed later on by potentially conflicting rules or regulations.

This is a common sense bill and I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3670 and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, Memorial Day is a time not only to honor members of our armed services who gave their lives in defense of our liberty, but also to convey our support for veterans and servicemembers. With the commemoration of Memorial Day earlier this week, it is fitting that we're considering H.R. 3670 today.

H.R. 3670, by conferring job protections for servicemembers, conveys our commitment to help reservists and other members of the uniformed services return to civilian life. Specifically, the bill would ensure that the protections afforded under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act apply to Transportation Security Administration employees and applicants, just as they do everywhere in the public and private sector.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge TSA's leadership in hiring veterans. Currently, veterans make up over 23 percent of TSA's workforce. I would encourage my colleagues and the

general public to keep that number in mind when they encounter a TSA worker at an airport checkpoint. There is a one in four chance that the person conducting the screening is a veteran and deserves the respect and appreciation commensurate with that title.

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

Mr. KING of New York. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS).

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman KING for the time. I also rise today in strong support of H.R. 3670, a bill introduced by my good friend, Mr. WALZ from Minnesota.

This bill extends reemployment protections to employees of the Transportation Security Administration by making them subject to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, or USERRA.

USERRA is a law that protects the reemployment rights of servicemembers so they are able to keep their jobs, benefits, and seniority in their civilian jobs after serving on active duty.

When TSA was created soon after 9/11, it was given a USERRA exemption to allow the agency to hire new employees without delay for airport screenings. There is no evidence that applying USERRA to TSA will impede TSA's mission of protecting our Nation's air travel system. In fact, bringing TSA under USERRA will strengthen their ability to recruit and retain highly qualified veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I would note that in testimony submitted for the record on H.R. 3670, TSA stated that its current practice already conforms to the requirements that H.R. 3670 would put into statute. Therefore, enactment of H.R. 3670 would ensure existing protections could not be weakened by a change in administration rules or regulations.

I want to thank my good friend Mr. WALZ for introducing this legislation. I also thank Chairman JEFF MILLER of Florida and Ranking Member FILNER of California for their support, and I thank Mr. KING.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the original sponsor of the legislation under consideration, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ).

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and the chairman for bringing this bill to the floor. More importantly, I thank you both for your unwavering defense of this Nation in smart policy and an unwavering commitment to make sure we get it right.

I, like my colleagues and millions of other Americans, spent Monday at Memorial Day observances. That's the date we give thanks to those brave patriots who gave the supreme sacrifice so we could all live in freedom. But as the gentleman from Mississippi also said, it's also a time to think of the responsibility we have for those who have served and have come back.

Our responsibility to our veterans is our Nation's highest moral responsibility. After years of war, we have millions of returning veterans who deserve our respect and support. This piece of legislation helps us keep a promise to those brave warriors. As you heard from my colleagues, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act was passed by this Congress—a smart piece of legislation—in 1994. It simply says if you serve this Nation in uniform, you will not be disadvantaged in your civilian-sector job; you will have prompt reemployment when that service is done; and you will not be discriminated against because of current or past military service. It's keeping that commitment that if you put your life on the line, you put your health on the line, you shouldn't have to sacrifice your career progression against your peers just because you were willing to serve this Nation.

That piece of legislation was very clear also that the Federal Government should be a model employer. Also as the gentleman from Mississippi stated, TSA has a very important job of securing this Nation. They have done a wonderful job of hiring veterans. The issue at hand here is asking TSA to abide by the same rules as countless other agencies have. There is not a police force, a firefighting force, a school, or a private employer that hasn't sent a guardsman or a reservist off to do duty. They've had to change schedules and bring them back. In many small towns in my district, when you get a call up from the National Guard unit, most of the police department is gone with them. They've figured out how to do this, and they've done it by abiding by USERRA when they came back home and welcomed them back. It's absolutely unconscionable that TSA wouldn't.

As the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) noted, they say they're already complying with most of the regulations. They've had time to adjust to this. We need to make sure at a time of high unemployment against our veterans, that we of all people—the Federal Government—throws up no barriers in front of them, but welcomes them back, replaces them in their jobs, and moves them forward. That's not only morally the right thing to do; that's the right thing to do for national defense. These are our best and brightest willing to put their lives on the line. I want them at the front lines at our airports and ports and other places, and we should get them back into it.

I want to thank these two gentlemen for their unwavering work and also the chairman of the VA, Mr. MILLER, and Mr. FILNER. As was stated earlier, I thank an absolute champion of veterans rights, Mr. BILIRAKIS, who is the original cosponsor of this.

Mr. KING of New York. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Ms. BROWN).

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Thank you, Chairman KING and Ranking Member THOMPSON, for bringing this bill to the floor as we return from Memorial Day events with our constituents.

When the TSA was formed in the wake of 9/11, the worst terrorist attack in the history of the United States, Congress was attempting to consolidate many of the Nation's security duties that were spread out over all of the Departments. We were dedicated to the proposition that this event should never be repeated. Our response was quick that our civilian transportation system should never be used for attack ever again.

Out of the need for better airport security, the Transportation Security Administration was born. However, at the time, Republicans did not want to give the same rights to those Members of the Federal workforce as other Federal employees enjoy. One of those rights was USERRA, the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

Under USERRA, individuals retain certain rights when that person needs to be absent from his or her civilian employment to serve in this country's uniformed services.

This bill would require the TSA to comply with USERRA when dealing with air transportation passengers and property screeners.

I support this legislation as a good first step toward giving the same rights available to all Federal employees.

And let me just take this moment to thank TSA for their hard work and dedication in keeping us safe. Sometimes I know it is inconvenient to the traveling public, but remember that they're there to protect us and they would not be there if 9/11 had not occurred. Thank you for your service.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I advise my colleague that I am prepared to close as I have no further speakers.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

□ 1810

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for yielding, and I thank the chairman of the full committee and the ranking member.

As a ranking member of the Transportation Security Subcommittee, it's my privilege to rise to support H.R. 3670.

Let me thank the author of the bill, the gentleman from Minnesota, for his leadership—he is always speaking eloquently but fighting for our veterans, and we thank you very much both for your service and your leadership—and also to thank the gentleman from Florida for her kind and astute remarks regarding the importance of TSA.

In the last 24 hours, there was a breach of security in San Diego when an individual went through a secured door and boarded a plane. The immediate response of some of the commentators was: What was TSA doing? I

think the only comment is: They were doing their job.

And that breach obviously occurred before any entering into the secured area, but it tells us how important TSA really is and being on the front line of securing this Nation and being part of the team that has allowed us to not have a tragic incident on our soil since 9/11.

It is important to have the TSA comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, USERRA, ensures that our valued citizens who have served in the Armed Forces, Reserves, National Guard, or other uniformed services are not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their service. They deserve this protection.

Under current law, the TSA is not required to comply with certain provisions of Federal labor laws, including USERRA. This is not right. Currently the TSA, which has more than 50,000 employees, is not required to hold positions and promotions for employees who are called away for military service. Ten thousand veterans serve on the TSA's workforce. That is one-fifth, or 20 percent, of their entire workforce.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. The head of my airport, Bush Intercontinental Airport, Colonel Testa, is retired military. The law specifies certain rank for individuals who serve in the uniformed services, including those in the Reserves or the National Guard who are called to duty. I join with my colleagues to support this legislation to ensure that TSA complies with USERRA.

Just 2 days ago we celebrated Memorial Day, and I would offer to say that we must continue to support our veterans but also mourn those who are lost, but in their name, it's important to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate H.R. 3670, "To require the Transportation Security Administration to comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act." The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) ensures that our valued citizens who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, Reserves, National Guard or other "uniformed services" are not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their service.

Under current law, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is not required to comply with certain provisions of federal labor laws, including USERRA. This is not right.

Currently the TSA, which has more than 50,000 employees, is not required to hold positions and promotions for employees who are called away for military service. 10,000 veterans serve on the TSA's workforce. That is 1/5 or 20 percent of their entire workforce.

The law specifies certain rights for individuals who serve in the uniformed services, in-

cluding those in the reserves or the National Guard who are called to active duty.

In particular, USERRA prohibits employers from discriminating on the basis of military service or obligation and protects covered individuals' rights to be reemployed upon returning from duty.

H.R. 3670 requires the TSA to comply with USERRA. According to TSA, the agency's existing policies regarding individuals who leave TSA to undertake uniformed service are already consistent with USERRA. We want to make absolutely sure that our veterans, servicemen, and future soldiers are protected by the laws that govern our great Nation. We have to ensure that they are taken care of. They are courageous enough to defend, and sometimes give their lives for the United States. We should do what we can to honor their bravery.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that H.R. 3670 would not significantly affect the TSA's costs nor would enacting the bill affect direct spending or revenues.

I strongly support our troops and the brave men and women who have served in our armed forces. After their honorable service they should not have to face obstacles in finding civilian employment due to their service.

We must do everything in our power to ensure Members of our Armed Services are discriminated against based upon past, present, or future military service. They have sacrificed for their country and when they return to their civilian life that sacrifice should be honored not viewed as a negative. The federal government should be a "model employer" under USERRA, which is why H.R. 3670 is such a vital piece of legislation. Again, I urge you to honor the sacrifice of our troops.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3670 enjoys bipartisan support of both the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Homeland Security and deserves the support of the full House today.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KING of New York. It's only because of the late hour—we have three more pieces of vital legislation to pass in the next 15 or 20 minutes—that I am not speaking at length on this issue because it is so vital. I thank the gentleman from Minnesota for it.

I urge Members to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3670, to require the Transportation Security Administration, TSA, to comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, USERRA, is intended to ensure that persons who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, Reserves, National Guard or other uniformed services: (1) are not disadvantaged in their civilian careers because of their service, (2) are promptly reemployed in their civilian jobs upon their return from duty, and (3) are not discriminated against in employment based on past, present, or future military service.

Soon after the attacks of 9/11, TSA was given USERRA exemption to allow the agency to hire new employees without delay for airport screenings. USERRA protects service

members so they are able to keep their job, benefits, and seniority in their civilian job if they are called up to Active Duty. TSA has voluntarily adopted some USERRA provisions for their employees, but TSA no longer requires special hiring authorities that it required when newly created. With more than 10,000 veterans among the agency's employees, counting for 20 percent of the Transportation Security Officer workforce, TSA, like any other federal agency, should be required to comply with the same USERRA rules as other Federal agencies and private employers.

With the month of May and National Military Appreciation Month concluding, we must continue to appreciate and support our service members by supporting this legislation. Our veterans and servicemembers do not choose our conflicts and we cannot allow employers to punish them for their unrelenting dedication to our nation's freedom.

Mr. Speaker, requiring the Transportation Security Administration to comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act is the right thing to do. That is why I strongly support H.R. 3670 and I urge my colleagues to support our servicemembers and veterans by supporting H.R. 3670.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3670.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WMD INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION SHARING ACT OF 2012

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2764) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish weapons of mass destruction intelligence and information sharing functions of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security and to require dissemination of information analyzed by the Department to entities with responsibilities relating to homeland security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2764

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 "WMD Intelligence and Information Sharing Act of 2012".

SEC. 2. WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION SHARING.

(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:

"SEC. 210G. WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION SHARING.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Office of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security shall—

"(1) support homeland security-focused intelligence analysis of terrorist actors, their claims,