

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Representative MEEHAN, who is chair of the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence.

Mr. MEEHAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for yielding and I thank you for your kind words, and I thank the ranking member for his kind words in support of this important amendment.

I urge support for H.R. 2764, which provides, as has been explained, important guidance for the weapons of mass destruction and intelligence sharing functions of the Department of Homeland Security.

Now, this work has been built on a framework of important work, the roots of which were set with former Senators Bob Graham and Jim Talent, who were charged by a previous Congress just 2 years ago with establishing the Weapons of Mass Destruction Weapons Commission. They found that unless decisive action was taken, it was their prediction that a WMD attack would occur somewhere in the world by 2013.

I recently returned from the Middle East, and one of the striking takeaways from that trip was the amount of chemical weapons which are currently stockpiled in Syria. Similar concerns have been expressed about missing Libyan chemical weapons stockpiles. And obviously the great fear of all is that these weapons will get into the hands of al Qaeda terrorists or others during times of great instability.

We can't also forget the world's top State sponsor of terrorism, Iran, which has explicitly stated that it would use nuclear weapons to "wipe Israel off the map."

Al Qaeda has reportedly made efforts to acquire what we call chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear materials, or CBRN, to make weapons of mass destruction in the past. Osama bin Laden's death should not create an atmosphere of complacency. In fact, with multiple affiliate networks around the world targeting the U.S. homeland and interests, it is important that we remain as vigilant as ever. Al Qaeda is now led by Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden's longtime second in command, and the possibility of a WMD terrorist attack cannot be overstated.

The congressionally established WMD Commission has been relentless in its efforts to ensure that actions are being taken to meet what they describe as a very real threat. Congress must do its part to ensure that the Nation is meeting its WMD detection and prevention responsibilities in a meaningful and risk-based way.

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CBRN materials can be quite difficult to detect and to prevent, and the danger they pose is unimaginable. This bill will ensure sustained DHS commit-

ment and facilitate the partnership across the intelligence community, other government partners, and with the public.

I urge support for this bipartisan bill. Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 2764. Enactment of this measure will strengthen the partnership between the Department of Homeland Security and our Nation's first preventers against one of the most vexing homeland security threats: weapons of mass destruction.

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

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, Representative MEEHAN has spent a great deal of time studying various threats to the homeland, including al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the Pakistani Taliban, Hezbollah, and Boko Haram. He fully understands the threat to the U.S. homeland and why this legislation is so vital.

I urge Members to support H.R. 2764, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2764, "WMD Intelligence and Information Sharing Act of 2011." This legislation amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 would direct the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), through the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (OIA), to undertake various activities to combat the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Those efforts would include assessments and analyses of threats and the sharing of such reports with federal, state, local, and tribal authorities.

While our intelligence community is strong and sophisticated, it is made even more powerful through the sharing of information between federal, state, and local officials as well as across bureaus.

We are all working towards a common goal—to keep the US and its citizens safe. In order to ensure we are working with all of our available resources and information, we must continue to advance regulations that allow for the sharing of information between our officials. This also includes ensuring that local law enforcement officers across the nation are trained to identify any potential threats and contact the correct authorities.

A partnership between DHS analysts and local law enforcement can enhance situational awareness with respect to the threat of terrorism to the millions of Americans who rely on mass transit systems, including the threat of an attack involving a weapon of mass destruction.

Mass transit systems across the world have continually been a target for terrorist threats, namely the 2004 terrorist attack on a packed commuter train in Madrid, Spain that killed 191 people. There was also the suicide bombing attack in London that left 50 dead in 2005.

While we have so far been fortunate to have not had any incidents of terrorism in our mass transit systems, we know of the threat planned by al-Qaeda to commemorate the both anniversary of 9/11 by attacking US mass transit systems. Thankfully, a Naval SEALs raid on Osama bin Laden's compound discovered and thwarted this plot.

Past incidents that were looked over by federal authorities have been resolved by local

enforcement officers. It is imperative that they continue to assist the efforts of the DHS and that the DHS is open and accessible to these officers via the communication of appropriate information.

SHORT OVERVIEW OF BILL

H.R. 2764, "WMD Intelligence and Information Sharing Act of 2011"—amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and would require the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to:

(1) support homeland security-focused intelligence analysis of terrorist actors, their claims, and their plans to conduct attacks involving chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear materials against the nation and of global infectious disease, public health, food, agricultural, and veterinary issues;

(2) support homeland security-focused risk analysis and risk assessments of such homeland security hazards by providing relevant quantitative and non-quantitative threat information;

(3) leverage homeland security intelligence capabilities and structures to enhance prevention, protection, response, and recovery efforts with respect to a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear attack; and

(4) share information and provide tailored analytical support on these threats to state, local, and tribal authorities as well as other national biosecurity and biodefense stakeholders.

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. 2764, 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.

JAIME ZAPATA BORDER ENFORCEMENT SECURITY TASK FORCE ACT

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 915) to establish a Border Enforcement Security Task Force program to enhance border security by fostering coordinated efforts among Federal, State, and local border and law enforcement officials to protect United States border cities and communities from trans-national crime, including violence associated with drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal alien trafficking and smuggling, violence, and kidnapping along and across the international borders of the United States, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 915

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 "Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND DECLARATION OF PURPOSES.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) overriding mission is to lead a unified national effort to protect the United States. United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative agency within DHS and is charged with enforcing a wide array of laws, including laws related to securing the border and combating criminal smuggling.

(2) Mexico's northern border with the United States has experienced a dramatic surge in border crime and violence in recent years due to intense competition between Mexican drug cartels and criminal smuggling organizations that employ predatory tactics to realize their profits.

(3) Law enforcement agencies at the United States northern border face similar challenges from transnational smuggling organizations.

(4) In response, DHS has partnered with Federal, State, local, tribal, and foreign law enforcement counterparts to create the Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) initiative as a comprehensive approach to addressing border security threats. These multi-agency teams are designed to increase information-sharing and collaboration among the participating law enforcement agencies.

(5) BEST teams incorporate personnel from ICE, United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATFE), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the United States Coast Guard (USCG), and the U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO), along with other key Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies.

(6) Foreign law enforcement agencies include Mexico's Secretaria de Seguridad Publica (SSP), the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

SEC. 3. BORDER ENFORCEMENT SECURITY TASK FORCE.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established in United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) a program known as a Border Enforcement Security Task Force (referred to as "BEST").

(b) **PURPOSE.**—The purpose of the BEST program is to establish units to enhance border security by addressing and reducing border security threats and violence by—

(1) facilitating collaboration among Federal, State, local, tribal, and foreign law enforcement agencies to execute coordinated activities in furtherance of border security, and homeland security; and

(2) enhancing information-sharing, including the dissemination of homeland security information among such agencies.

(c) **COMPOSITION AND DESIGNATION.**—

(1) **COMPOSITION.**—BEST units may be comprised of personnel from—

(A) United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement;

(B) United States Customs and Border Protection;

(C) the United States Coast Guard;

(D) other Federal agencies, as appropriate;

(E) appropriate State law enforcement agencies;

(F) foreign law enforcement agencies, as appropriate;

(G) local law enforcement agencies from affected border cities and communities; and

(H) appropriate tribal law enforcement agencies.

(2) **DESIGNATION.**—The Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Assistant Secretary for ICE, is authorized to establish BEST units in jurisdictions where such units can contribute to the BEST program's missions, as appropriate. Prior to establishing a BEST unit, the Assistant Secretary shall consider the following factors:

(A) Whether the area where the BEST unit would be established is significantly impacted by cross-border threats.

(B) The availability of Federal, State, local, tribal, and foreign law enforcement resources to participate in the BEST unit.

(C) The extent to which border security threats are having a significant harmful impact in the jurisdiction in which the BEST unit is to be established, and other jurisdictions of the country.

(D) Whether or not an Integrated Border Enforcement Team already exists in the area where the BEST unit would be established.

(d) **OPERATION.**—After making a designation under subsection (c)(2), and in order to provide Federal assistance to the area so designated, the Secretary of Homeland Security may—

(1) obligate such sums as are appropriated for the BEST program;

(2) direct the assignment of Federal personnel to the BEST program, subject to the approval of the head of the department or agency that employs such personnel; and

(3) take other actions to assist State, local, tribal, and foreign jurisdictions to participate in the BEST program.

(e) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the establishment of the BEST program under subsection (a) and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit to Congress a report on the effectiveness of the BEST program in enhancing border security and reducing the drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal alien trafficking and smuggling, violence, and kidnapping along and across the international borders of the United States as measured by crime statistics, including violent deaths, incidents of violence, and drug-related arrests.

(f) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Homeland Security \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2012 through 2016 to—

(1) establish and operate the BEST program, including to provide for operational, administrative, and technological costs to Federal, State, local, tribal and foreign law enforcement agencies participating in the BEST program; and

(2) investigate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals engaged in drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal alien trafficking and smuggling, violence, and kidnapping along and across the international borders of the United States.

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.

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.

There is probably no bill that is more meaningful to Members of Congress, particularly the gentleman from Texas, my good friend, Mr. CUELLAR, than the Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act. This would authorize for the first time a task force, led by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, known as Border Enforcement Security Task Force, or BEST teams. It is named after ICE Agent Jaime Zapata, who was killed in the line of duty while serving on a BEST team in Mexico in February 2011.

I want to thank the sponsors of the legislation, Mr. CUELLAR, the ranking member of the Border and Maritime Subcommittee, and Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, the chairman of the Oversight, Investigations, and Management Subcommittee, for their dedicated work on this bipartisan bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 915, the Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act, would authorize for the first time a task force led by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), known as Border Enforcement Security Task Forces, or BEST Teams.

This legislation is named after the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent, Jamie Zapata, who was killed in the line of duty while serving on a BEST team in Mexico in February 2011.

I would like to thank the sponsors of this legislation, Mr. CUELLAR of Texas, the Ranking Member of the Border and Maritime Subcommittee, and Mr. MCCAUL of Texas, the Chairman of the Oversight, Investigations, and Management Subcommittee, for their dedicated work on this bipartisan bill.

The Department of Homeland Security's overriding mission is to lead a unified national effort to protect the United States. ICE is the largest investigative agency within DHS and is charged with enforcing a wide array of laws, including laws related to securing the border and combating criminal smuggling.

BEST teams incorporate personnel from ICE, Customs and Border Protection, DEA, ATF, FBI, U.S. Coast Guard, as well as other Federal, state, local and foreign law enforcement agencies.

These task forces focus on the identification, prioritization, and investigation of emerging and existing border security threats including transnational crime, violence associated with drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal alien trafficking, and kidnapping along the international borders of the United States.

Since the inception of the BEST program, BEST teams have made over 8,000 criminal arrests and 5,000 administrative arrests resulting in 4,570 indictments and 3,936 convictions. BEST teams have also seized over 69,000 pounds of cocaine, 752,000 pounds of marijuana, 3,800 pounds of methamphetamines, 3,000 vehicles, 13,000 weapons, and approximately \$97 million in U.S. currency and monetary instruments.

In addition, the bill includes language to address a potential duplication identified by the Government Accountability Office in its March 2011 report to ensure that BEST units do not overlap with other Integrated Law Enforcement task forces along the Northern Border.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation.

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

I rise in strong support of H.R. 915, the Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act. H.R. 915 would, for the first time, statutorily authorize an important border security program, the BEST program.

Under BEST, ICE partners with Federal, State, local, and foreign law enforcement counterparts to establish targeted, cross-agency teams to identify, disrupt, and dismantle criminal

organizations posing significant threats to the border security. Currently, the BEST programs has 31 teams located at our Nation's northern and southern borders, as well as at seaports and places as varied as Tucson, Arizona; Detroit, Michigan; the New York Seaport; and Mexico City, Mexico.

To date, BEST units have initiated more than 6,800 cases, resulting in criminal and administrative arrests and the seizure of significant quantities of narcotics, weapons, ammunition, and currency.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the original sponsor of the legislation under consideration, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR).

Mr. CUELLAR. I want to thank the ranking member for yielding this time to me.

I'm pleased that the House is considering H.R. 915, the Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force, or BEST Act, a bipartisan bill by myself and Congressman MICHAEL MCCAUL from Texas. I would like to thank my friend, Chairman KING; my good friend, Ranking Member THOMPSON; and also Subcommittee Chairwoman MILLER for their support of this bill, as this bill was unanimously reported out of the House Homeland Security Committee.

As many of you know, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, Homeland Security Investigations, in partnership with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, as well as other Federal, State, local, and foreign law enforcement counterparts created the BEST initiative—in fact, my hometown of Laredo is the first one—which is a comprehensive approach to identifying, disrupting, and dismantling criminal organizations posing significant threats to border and maritime security.

H.R. 915 would codify the BEST program by authorizing the Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the director of ICE, to establish the BEST units to make sure that everybody works together and coordinates and communicates together to make sure that we fight crime.

This bill authorizes \$10 million per year for the program. And this bill, as the chairman said a few minutes ago, is named in the memory of Jaime Zapata, a Homeland Security Investigations special agent and BEST unit member who was killed in the line of duty in Mexico in February of 2011. We are grateful for Special Agent Zapata's service to our Nation and for the exemplary work of his colleagues in support of homeland security.

Currently, the BEST units are comprised of 750 members, representing over 100 law enforcement agencies working together. These BEST units are building an impressive record of success. And I'm asking now that we all support this particular bill.

Again, I want to thank the chairman, the ranking member of the sub-

committee, my friend MICHAEL MCCAUL, and urge all Members to support this important bipartisan bill.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Coming from Texas, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas, the ranking member of the subcommittee, for this legislation.

I rise in support of H.R. 915. We have heard that there has been a constant intrusion of activity over the border, specifically dealing with drug cartels. We recognize that it is important to utilize the combination of resources, and fusion centers represent an excellent logistical use of that, as they have been in our urban centers. Let me support and salute the utilization of fusion centers because it is extremely important that we provide a safe and secure border in the United States and on border States.

Mr. KING of New York. I have no further requests for time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I ask support of H.R. 915. It's a good bill. I urge its adoption, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Laredo, Mr. CUELLAR, for introducing this bill and for his outstanding work on the committee, and also my good friend, Mr. MCCAUL, for their cosponsorship of the legislation.

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

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, as an original cosponsor of the Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act, I rise today in favor of this important legislation. H.R. 915 strengthens our homeland security by codifying the authority to create Border Enforcement Security Task Force, BEST teams and giving the program the resources it needs.

It is an unfortunate fact of life that for generations our border communities have been subjected to crime and violence at the hands of criminals, smugglers and drug cartels. Now with the terrible rise of violence that has occurred in Mexico over the past few years, this threat has never been greater. In response to these realities, the Department of Homeland Security created the Border Enforcement Security Task Force initiative as an innovative approach to combating the increasing threat of transnational crime.

BEST operates by bringing together all of the federal, state and local law enforcement agencies that share the responsibility of securing our borders. Under the auspices of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the BEST program enables the unique capabilities and resources of each participating agency to combine into a synergistic response to border crime and violence. BEST has also expanded to include our seaports and other non-border ports of entry as well. This has allowed the BEST program to evolve into a truly comprehensive security countermeasure against transnational crime and terrorist attack.

It is also altogether fitting and proper that this bill be named after ICE Special Agent

Jaime J. Zapata. On February 15, 2011, Special Agent Zapata gave his life in support of the ideals that are engendered in the BEST program. This legislation will stand as a testament to his selfless sacrifice and steadfast devotion to his duty as an American law enforcement officer.

As chairman of the Homeland Security Subcommittee for Oversight, Investigations and Management, it is clear to me that the BEST program has made our border communities and our Nation safer and more secure. I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation so that we may continue its success in protecting our Nation.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 915, the Jaime Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act, which establishes a Border Enforcement Security Task Force program to enhance cooperation amongst border security forces.

This legislation is named in honor of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent Jaime Zapata, who was killed in the line of the duty while serving on a Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) team in Mexico. BEST teams incorporate personnel from ICE, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATFE), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the United States Coast Guard (USCG), and the U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO), along with other key Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies.

H.R. 915 establishes a BEST program to enhance border security by fostering coordinated efforts among Federal, State, and local border and law enforcement officials to protect United States border cities and communities from transnational crime, including violence associated with drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal alien trafficking and smuggling, violence, and kidnapping along and across the international borders of the United States.

Securing our borders from those who would harm Americans is my highest priority as a Member of Congress. As a member of the Homeland Security Committee I am committed to working with my colleagues and the Administration to keep our borders secure from all those who threaten our freedom and liberty. As the Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications of the Committee on Homeland Security, I have sponsored and co-sponsored legislation that improves our Nation's ability to secure the Nation's borders. I support H.R. 915 because it is a positive step in the right direction and I strongly urge my colleagues to do so as well.

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. 915, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

MASS TRANSIT INTELLIGENCE PRIORITIZATION ACT

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3140) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to prioritize the assignment of officers and analysts to certain State and urban area fusion centers to enhance the security of mass transit systems.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3140

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 “Mass Transit Intelligence Prioritization Act”.

SEC. 2. MASS TRANSIT INTELLIGENCE PRIORITIZATION.

Section 210A of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 124h) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (f) through (k) as subsections (e) through (l), respectively;

(2) in subsection (l), as so redesignated, by striking “subsection (i)” and inserting “subsection (j)”; and

(3) by inserting after subsection (e) the following new subsection (f):

“(f) MASS TRANSIT INTELLIGENCE PRIORITIZATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall make it a priority to assign officers and intelligence analysts under this section from the Department, including the Transportation Security Administration, to participating State and urban area fusion centers located in high-risk jurisdictions with mass transit systems in order to enhance the security of such mass transit systems by assisting Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement authorities in identifying, investigating, and otherwise interdicting persons, weapons, and contraband that pose a threat to homeland security.

“(2) MASS TRANSIT INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTS.—When performing the responsibilities described in subsection (d), officers and intelligence analysts assigned to participating State and urban area fusion centers under this section shall have, as a primary responsibility, the creation of mass transit intelligence products that—

“(A) assist State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in deploying their resources most efficiently to help detect and interdict terrorists, weapons of mass destruction, and contraband at mass transit systems of the United States;

“(B) promote more consistent and timely dissemination of mass transit security-relevant information among jurisdictions with mass transit systems; and

“(C) enhance the Department’s situational awareness with respect to the threat of acts of terrorism at or involving mass transit systems of the United States.”.

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.

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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.

Only due to the shortness of time, I will keep my remarks brief. This bill amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and directs the DHS Secretary to make it a priority to assign officers and intelligence analysts to participate in State and urban area fusion centers located in high-risk jurisdictions with mass transit systems.

I would like to thank Congresswoman SPEIER and Chairman MEEHAN for their dedicated work in this area.

I reserve the balance of my time.

This bill amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to make it a priority to assign DHS officers and intelligence analysts to participate in state and urban area fusion centers located in high-risk jurisdictions with mass transit systems.

I would like to thank Congresswoman SPEIER and Chairman MEEHAN for their dedicated work in this area.

These officers and analysts will enhance the security of mass transit systems by assisting law enforcement authorities in identifying, investigating, and otherwise interdicting persons, weapons, and contraband that pose a threat to homeland security.

The primary responsibility of these officers and analysts will be to create mass transit intelligence products that assist law enforcement agencies in deploying their resources more efficiently, promote more consistent and timely dissemination of mass transit security-related information among jurisdictions with mass transit systems, and improve DHS’ situational awareness in regard to the threat of terrorist acts at or involving U.S. mass transit.

It has been noted in documents uncovered from his Abbottabad compound, that Osama bin Laden expressed a continued interest in striking mass transit systems in the United States—railroads in particular.

That raid is a stark reminder that—after 9/11, the Christmas Day plot, Najibullah Zazi, Bryant Neal Vinas, and others—al Qaeda is still focused on striking our transportation systems. I urge support for this bipartisan measure.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3140, the Mass Transit Intelligence Prioritization Act, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as ranking member on the Committee on Homeland Security, I have observed that mass transit systems over the years have consistently been a target for terrorist groups, including al Qaeda. H.R. 3140, the Mass Transit Intelligence Prioritization Act, requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to prioritize the assignment of mass transit intelligence analysts, including from TSA, to State and local fusion centers with major mass transit systems in their jurisdictions.

In short, this is a commonsense bill that would enhance security for the mass transit systems of our Nation by improving the sharing of information, and I urge my colleagues’ support of it.

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

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the original sponsor of the legislation under consideration and a former member of the Committee on Homeland Security, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER).

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding and the chairman for his leadership as well.

As has been mentioned, this bill is important in our efforts to make sure that mass transit is under the umbrella for the sharing of information. Let us not forget that in 2004 al Qaeda detonated multiple explosives during rush hour on a packed commuter train in Madrid, Spain, killing 191 people. A little more than a year later in London, a terrorist cell linked to al Qaeda carried out four suicide bombings, three of them on the London Underground, killing more than 50. To date, the United States has not experienced the death and destruction associated with dirty bombs or a mass transit attack. But that doesn’t mean we haven’t had close calls. In fact, in September of 2009, Najibullah Zazi was arrested in New York City for allegedly plotting to blow up New York City subways.

In October 2010, the FBI arrested a man who was plotting a large-scale attack here in Washington, D.C. on the Metro system. Last year he was sentenced to 23 years in Federal prison.

Most recently, we learned through documents taken from the compound of Osama bin Laden following the successful Navy SEAL raid that al Qaeda was plotting to attack U.S. mass transit systems to commemorate the 10th anniversary of 9/11.

Millions of Americans travel each day on mass transit to work, but these systems, such as subways, have relatively few security measures. This bill will change that. It will make sure that fusion centers bring together Federal, State, and local law enforcement and emergency management agencies to share information and protect communities. The bill further requires that officers assigned to these fusion centers create mass transit intelligence products. One of the key lessons of 9/11 is information-sharing is key to terrorism prevention.

I urge my colleagues to support this measure. The CBO has determined that this bill would have no significant impact on the budget. I also would like to pay special respect to the chair of the Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, who I enjoyed working with immensely.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. I have no other speakers, and I’m prepared to close.