

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.

□ 1830

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.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3140, as introduced by our former committee colleague, Ms. SPEIER, is a needed, commonsense piece of legislation with a history of bipartisan support. I urge my colleagues to support this measure and the security of our mass transit systems.

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

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I come from a region which has almost 6 million daily passengers on subway and commuter lines. This legislation is absolutely vital, I urge its adoption, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 3140, the Mass Transit Intelligence Prioritization Act. Since the catastrophic events of September 11th, 2001 the United States has gone to every possible length to prevent another terrorist attack.

Unfortunately, our enemies cannot be deterred through logic and reason. No matter how secure we make our borders they will always be developing new ways to threaten our citizens. For this reason it is vital that America continues to improve its security and intelligence capabilities.

Since 9/11 mass transit attacks against the West have been on the rise. In 2004 a terrorist cell of Al Qaeda detonated multiple explosives on packed trains in Madrid, Spain, killing 191 people. Only a year later London was attacked by another cell linked to Al Qaeda. Four suicide bombers, all of whom were on public transportation killed more than fifty people. The Mumbai attacks followed, which killed over 200 people during evening rush hour on the local train network.

Mr. Speaker, if there is one lesson to take away from all of these horrific events, it is that America is still frighteningly vulnerable to a mass transit attack. Terrorists continue to develop methods to get around our security systems and inflict as much damage as possible.

As a member of the House Committee on Homeland Security it is my duty to ensure everything possible is being done to prevent another attack on U.S. soil. In my own district in California there are multiple systems that could be prone to attack, but across the country there are systems that have little protection.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority is North America's largest public transportation system. It serves a population of 14.6 million people in the 5,000-square-mile area fanning out from New York City through Long Island, southeastern New York State, and Connecticut. Each weekday an average of 8,487,642 use this system. If this system is targeted, they have little security or defense and millions of people could be at risk.

The Mass Transit Intelligence Prioritization Act aims to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to prioritize intelligence officers and analysts, including those from the Transportation Security Administration to high-risk jurisdictions with mass transit systems. The bill also requires the officers assigned to these areas to develop mass transit intelligence products as a primary responsibility.

This bill offers a way to promote the timely sharing of information between Federal, State and local partners, with the ultimate goal of preventing any attack against an American mass transit system.

Mr. Speaker, I fully support H.R. 3140 and the added security it brings to American citizens, and all those using our public transportation systems.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3140, "Mass Transit Intelligence Prioritization Act." This legislation would amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002. It calls for the Secretary of Homeland Security (DHS) to make it a priority to assign DHS officers and intelligence analysts, including from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), to participating state and urban area fusion centers located in high-risk jurisdictions with mass transit systems to enhance the security of these systems. These officers would help local enforcement authorities identify and investigate any threats to homeland security.

The DHS officers and analysts will also be responsible for creating mass transit intelligence products that will: (1) assist law enforcement agencies in deploying their resources most efficiently to help detect and interdict terrorists, weapons of mass destruction, and contraband at U.S. mass transit systems; (2) promote more consistent and timely dissemination of mass transit security-relevant information among jurisdictions with such systems; and (3) enhance DHS's situational awareness with respect to the threat of terrorist acts at or involving U.S. mass transit systems.

As a Ranking Member on the Subcommittee for Transportation, ensuring the safety and security of the nation's public transportation system is one of my top priorities.

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 10th 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.

Rising gas prices have caused metro transportation systems to be used now more than ever, creating an additional urgency to keep citizens safe on the daily commute.

According to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), Americans made 10.4 billion trips on public transportation in 2011. This is the second highest annual ridership since 1957. Houston's Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County accounted for 5.2 percent of that gain and has seen six consecutive months of increased ridership. In Houston, we understand the importance of a secured public transportation system.

Our metro transit system is closely partnered with the US Department of Homeland Security. It is equipped with surveillance capabilities and our officers are trained in counterterrorism measures as well as in the latest law enforcement techniques. In addition officers regularly check bus and rail lines and perform sweeps through the Transit Center as well as through the Park & Ride lots and bus stops.

As the city grows and new metro employees are hired, it is my goal that the Houston public transportation system maintains its high level

of security and a strong relationship with Homeland Security. I desire this same level of security for all of the public transportation systems in the US.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3140 "Mass Transit Intelligence Prioritization Act."

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. 3140.

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.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5743, INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5854, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5855, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5325, ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

Mr. NUGENT, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112-504) on the resolution (H. Res. 667) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5743) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5854) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5855) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5325) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order: