

of our country. I'm proud that when countries need help, we're there.

But when disasters strike right here at home, I do believe that we should help Americans first, and we don't know when or where the next disaster will occur. It could be tonight, could be tomorrow, could be next week. But let's make sure, before we leave here today, that we tell our neighbors and friends back home and around this great Nation that, in their greatest time of need, their country will be there for them.

With all the devastation and destruction that happened from last year's flood, I saw the greatness of America. I saw neighbors helping neighbors. I saw strangers helping people. I saw students helping the elderly. I saw what makes this country great, and I saw the American people come together.

It's time that this Congress comes together. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6296, 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.

BORDER SECURITY INFORMATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2012

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6368) to require the Department of Justice, in consultation with the Department of Homeland Security, to provide a report to Congress on the Departments' ability to track, investigate and quantify cross-border violence along the Southwest Border and provide recommendations to Congress on how to accurately track, investigate, and quantify cross-border violence, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6368

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 "Border Security Information Improvement Act of 2012".

SEC. 2. STUDY.

(a) REPORT ON CROSS-BORDER VIOLENCE ON THE SOUTHWEST BORDER.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall jointly submit to the congressional committees set forth in subsection (b) a report on cross-border violence on the Southwest Border of the United States. Such study shall include—

(1) the definition of cross-border violence used by law enforcement components within the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security;

(2) the ability of the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security and their law

enforcement components to track, investigate, quantify, and report on the level of cross-border violence occurring along the Southwest Border of the United States;

(3) the extent to which the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security define and track cross-border violence and steps being taken to address the effects of cross-border violence along the Southwest Border of the United States;

(4) the information and data on cross-border violence collected and made available through inter-agency taskforces on the Southwest Border of the United States, including the Southwest Border High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, Arizona's Alliance to Combat Transnational Threats, the El Paso Intelligence Center, the Border Enforcement and Security Task Force, and State and Local Fusion Centers; and

(5) the additional resources needed to track, investigate, quantify and report on the level of cross-border violence occurring along the United States-Mexico border.

(b) CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The congressional committees set forth in this subsection are—

(1) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

(2) the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate;

(3) the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives; and

(4) the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 6368, as amended, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my colleague and good friend, Congressman FRANCISCO CANSECO, for his work on the issue of cross-border violence and its impact on the United States.

Mr. Speaker, In recent years, drug trafficking-related violence has increased in Mexico. According to Mexican officials, over 40,000 people have been killed as the result of drug-related violence since 2006.

As the gentleman from Texas has pointed out, we should be very concerned that there are insufficient methods to track this violence and that it spills over into the United States.

When evaluating increased violence in Mexico and its effect on the United States, a central concern is the potential for what has been termed "spillover violence"—an increase in drug trafficking-related violence in the United States.

The violence being committed by Mexican drug cartels within Mexico's own borders presents a national security challenge for Mexico. When that violence spills over into the United

States, it presents a national security concern for America as well.

Cross-border violence is a challenge for both countries while criminals kill not only each other but government officials, law enforcement and military officers, innocent civilians and children.

Administration officials maintain that there has not yet been a significant spillover of violence from Mexico into the United States. But we should not wait for it to happen.

This bill requires the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security to provide a joint report to Congress on the Departments' ability to track, investigate and measure cross-border violence along the Southwest border.

In addition, it directs the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security to make recommendations to Congress on how best to accurately track, investigate and measure cross-border violence.

Cross-border violence is a complex problem which cannot be resolved overnight. This legislation is an important first step in developing an overall strategy to combat spillover violence.

I again thank Mr. CANSECO for his work on this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I will now yield as much time as he might consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CANSECO).

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Mr. CANSECO. I want to thank my friend and colleague and fellow San Antonian—the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Mr. SMITH—as well as his diligent and hardworking staff, for their help on this very important matter.

I come to the floor today, Madam Speaker, in support of my legislation, H.R. 6368, the Border Security Information Improvement Act.

As the Representative of a district with nearly 800 miles of U.S.-Mexico border, I know firsthand how important the security of our citizens along our shared border with Mexico is. As I visit with the people of the 23rd District of Texas, I hear time and time again from Americans living along the border that they do not feel safe or secure. They talk of living in fear. They tell me that Washington is not paying attention as drugs, weapons, and humans are smuggled through their communities. Washington is not listening as they ask for help as violence from Mexican drug cartels spills into their communities and cities and towns.

Many of the statistics and information used to make claims about the security of our southwest border are based on information from sources, such as the Uniform Crime Report, that are not intended to measure security along our border.

Administration officials have claimed that the border is safe and secure. Yet, while attending a Homeland Security Committee hearing last May, I learned that the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice do not have a working, uniform definition of "spillover violence." Yet witnesses at the hearing—

high-ranking officials from Justice and Homeland Security—stated that there is no cross-border violence.

This is completely unacceptable. If the Federal Government cannot even define what endangers border citizens, we cannot ensure their safety. H.R. 6368 is simple. It is straightforward. It is a bill that will address this very problem.

It directs the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security to submit a report to Congress on their ability to define, to track, to investigate, and to quantify cross-border, or spillover, violence.

The Departments of Justice and Homeland Security will furthermore report what information and statistics are available and that are at their disposal in order to understand the amount of violence spilling into the United States. The ability to correctly monitor the level of spillover violence occurring across our Nation's borders will allow us to assess the success of our border security policies and to ensure that we have the correct policies in place in order to stop violence, stop drugs and contraband from spilling into the United States.

Lastly, the Departments will recommend to Congress what additional resources are necessary in order to track, quantify, and report on cross-border violence so that Congress can do its part and ensure that our Federal law enforcement agencies have the tools and the data that they need to do their jobs. Congress must be a willing and able partner in the fight against the ruthless Mexican cartels and the violence that they bring into our American communities.

Madam Speaker, the American people deserve to know the capability of their government to address cross-border violence. This bill does not seek to prove that one party is right or that one party is wrong. It simply seeks to find out the ability of the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security to define, to track, and to understand the amount of violence spilling into the United States from Mexico. In order to achieve a secure border, we must be able to correctly gauge the amount of violence that is spilling into the United States, and I believe that this bill is an important first step in that direction.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 6368 requires the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security, no later than 180 days after the enactment of this law, to jointly provide a report to Congress on those Departments' abilities to track, investigate, and quantify cross-border violence along our country's southwest border and to provide recommendations to Congress on how to accurately track, investigate, and quantify cross-border violence.

This seems like a good idea, and I note that the bill provides that we will receive budget recommendations along

with the report, as some have suggested, so that we can reduce the size of government with unspecified cuts, but then we are often surprised to see what those cuts are. Tracking, investigating, and responding appropriately to cross-border violence will require personnel and equipment, which obviously will require increases, not cuts, in the budget.

I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CANSECO) for his work on the bill. I look forward to the report, and I recommend the bill's passage.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, September 12, 2012.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, DC.

Dear CHAIRMAN SMITH: I am writing in regards to the jurisdictional interest of the Committee on Homeland Security over provisions in H.R. 6368, which requires the Department of Justice, in consultation with the Department of Homeland Security, to provide a report to Congress on the ability to track, investigate, and quantify cross-border violence along the Southwest Border and provide recommendations to Congress.

I understand the importance of advancing this legislation to the House floor in an expeditious manner. Therefore, the Committee on Homeland Security will discharge H.R. 6368 from further consideration. This action is conditional on our mutual understanding and agreement that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security over the subject matter included in this or similar legislation. I request that you urge the Speaker to appoint members of this Committee to any conference committee for consideration of any provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security in the House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation.

I also request that this response and your letter be included in the Committee on the Judiciary report to H.R. 6368 and in the Congressional Record during consideration of this measure on the House floor. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

PETER T. KING,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, September 13, 2012.

Hon. PETER KING,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN KING, Thank you for your letter dated September 12, 2012, regarding H.R. 6368, the "Border Security Information Improvement Act of 2012," which was referred to the Judiciary Committee on September 10.

I am most appreciative of your decision to forego consideration of H.R. 6368 so that it may move expeditiously to the House floor. I acknowledge that although you are waiving formal consideration of the bill, the Committee on Homeland Security is in no way waiving its jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in the bill. In addition, if a conference is necessary on this legislation, I will support any request that your committee be represented therein.

Finally, I shall be pleased to include your letter and this letter in the Congressional

Record during floor consideration of H.R. 6368.

Sincerely,

LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SCHMIDT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6368, as amended.

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

The title was amended so as to read: "A bill to require the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security to provide a joint report to Congress on the Departments' ability to track, investigate and quantify cross-border violence along the Southwest Border and provide recommendations to Congress on how to accurately track, investigate, and quantify cross-border violence."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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:

H.R. 5044, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 5912, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

ANDREW P. CARPENTER TAX ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5044) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income any discharge of indebtedness income on education loans of deceased veterans, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 400, nays 0, not voting 29, as follows:

[Roll No. 585]

YEAS—400

Ackerman	Baldwin	Berman
Adams	Barber	Biggart
Aderholt	Barletta	Bilbray
Alexander	Barrow	Bilirakis
Altmire	Bartlett	Bishop (GA)
Amash	Barton (TX)	Bishop (NY)
Amodel	Bass (CA)	Bishop (UT)
Andrews	Bass (NH)	Black
Austria	Becerra	Blackburn
Baca	Benishke	Blumenauer
Bachmann	Berg	Bonamici
Bachus	Berkley	Bonner