

□ 1600

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the ranking member of the subcommittee, and I thank the manager and, as well, the full committee chairperson and the ranking member of the full committee.

I think it would not be inappropriate to acknowledge that many of us gathered in the Judiciary Committee to wish Congressman MEL WATT well, so I will do so now on the floor of the House.

I am supporting this bill and again offer my appreciation for the Crime Subcommittee's bipartisan efforts to look into our problem with criminalization at the start of the Congress. I am concerned that there are a number of issues that were not discussed, but this particular legislation is an important step, which I know that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) has worked on quite extensively.

The bill before us today, in essence, requires States that receive certain criminal justice assistance grants to report to the Attorney General on a quarterly basis certain information regarding the death of any person who is detained, arrested, en route to incarceration, or incarcerated in State or local facilities or at boot camp. H.R. 1447 also imposes penalties on States that fail to comply with such reporting requirements. The bill also requires the head of each Federal law enforcement agency to report to the Attorney General annually certain information regarding the death of any person.

My focus is to indicate that this is a practical initiative. I personally know that in jurisdictions in Texas, we have had incidents where people have gone into the county jail for minimal violations of the law and came out in a body bag. It happened to a mother of two sons who lost her life because an infected knee was not taken care of. Or individuals who were ill, individuals who succumbed to inappropriate behavior by those who have charge over them. It is happening in jails and prisons across America.

This is a lifesaving initiative because many people will acknowledge that if you are incarcerated, even if you are there in our county jails before you are convicted—certainly, we recognize the criminal justice system, but it does not mean that you should lose your life.

However, as we come to the end of this first year of the 113th Congress, I know my colleagues would recognize as well that we are coming upon the 1-year anniversary of the tragic incident that occurred at Sandy Hook. There will be those who will be mourning this afternoon, holding a memorial to acknowledge the tragedy of the lives lost.

In this Congress, to our dismay, we have not been able to pass universal background checks, which could readily be on the floor of the House and be of value to those mourning mothers and fathers who now mourn 1 year later and ask the question: Why?

In addition, we have seen over the last year in many of our jurisdictions

the excessive violence that has taken our young people through gun violence, through gangs, and other actions that would welcome this Congress exercising its authority on issues dealing with antiviolenence, antibullying, of course, and, again, the ceasing of gun violence.

I look forward to establishing a commission in my community, responding to the incidents of 19 individuals being shot, two teenagers being killed, a young man from Jack Yates High School being killed, and another young man being shot in a park.

So as I rise to support this legislation, I would simply argue, as we move forward on this legislation, that there is work to be done, and I hope we can join together in a bipartisan manner to do so. I hope my colleagues also vote to support H.R. 1447.

Mr. Speaker, I as a long-time member of the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime, I was pleased to see a bipartisan effort to look into our problem with overcriminalization at the start of the Congress but I am disappointed that much of the crime which has been addressed by the Task Force has dealt with so-called regulatory crimes—as opposed to the type of crime involving violence and weapons—which has lead to prison overcrowding, trumped-up sentences for possession of marijuana, and served to further add to an underclass of Americans who are subject to the difficulty in filling out a job application because of onerous State and Federal laws which seek to punish harshly for missteps which, in the case of drug offenses, should have been managed with treatment and not incarceration.

I believe that most of the Members on the Committee and in the House of Representatives would agree that our prisons are overcrowded and that we must address this and other issues which plague our criminal justice system forthrightly and with urgency.

Having said that, the bill before us today does little to deal with that but it does fall under the ambit of crime and it does seek to address problems in criminal law and policy.

The legislation before us, H.R. 1447, The Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2013, sponsored by my Judiciary and CBC colleagues, BOBBY SCOTT and Ranking Member CONYERS, requires States that receive certain criminal justice assistance grants to report to the Attorney General on a quarterly basis certain information regarding the death of any person who is detained, arrested, en route to incarceration, or incarcerated in state or local facilities or a boot camp prison. H.R. 1447 also imposes penalties on States that fail to comply with such reporting requirements.

The bill also requires the head of each Federal law enforcement agency to report to the Attorney General annually certain information regarding the death of any person who:

(1) is detained or arrested by any officer of such agency (or by any State or local law enforcement officer for purposes of a Federal law enforcement operation); or

(2) is en route to be incarcerated or detained, or is incarcerated or detained, at any Federal correctional facility or Federal pretrial detention facility located within the United States or any other facility pursuant to a contract with or used by such agency.

Lastly, it requires the Attorney General to study such information and report on means by which it can be used to reduce the number of such deaths.

While I will support this measure—I will continue to urge my Judiciary Committee and House colleagues to think carefully about the problems with overcriminalization of some offenses and why we should be diligent in taking a thoughtful, measured look at the costly problem.

This body must consider taking a comprehensive look at criminal laws and policy which have a disproportionate impact on African Americans and other minorities in Houston, and around this great Nation.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I yield myself such time as I may consume just to thank the gentlelady from Texas for her statement; the gentleman from Georgia; the chair of the committee, Mr. GOODLATTE; and the ranking member, the lead cosponsor of the legislation, Mr. CONYERS, for their work. This is an important bill. We could use this information. And I want to thank again all of those that made today possible.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I just want to close up here by thanking both the gentleman from Virginia, Congressman SCOTT, and Congresswoman JACKSON LEE from Texas for their passion and for working hard on this.

This is a good way for our Judiciary Committee to end the year, on something we can agree upon that is a good thing. And I do appreciate the opportunity to be here. I would encourage all of my colleagues to support this fine piece of legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1447.

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.

ASSESSING PROGRESS IN HAITI ACT OF 2013

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3509) to direct the Secretary of State to submit to Congress a report on the status of post-earthquake recovery and development efforts in Haiti, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3509

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 “Assessing Progress in Haiti Act of 2013”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) On January 12, 2010, a massive earthquake struck near the Haitian capital city of Port-au-Prince, leaving an estimated 220,000 people dead, including 103 United States citizens, 101 United Nations personnel, and nearly 18 percent of the nation's civil service, as well as 300,000 injured, 115,000 homes destroyed, and 1,500,000 people displaced.

(2) According to the Post Disaster Needs Assessment conducted by the Government of Haiti, with technical assistance from the United Nations, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the European Commission, an estimated 15 percent of the population were directly affected by the disaster and related damages and economic losses totaled \$7,804,000,000.

(3) Even before the earthquake, Haiti had some of the lowest socioeconomic indicators and the second highest rate of income disparity in the world, conditions that have further complicated post-earthquake recovery efforts and, according to the World Bank, have significantly reduced the prospects of economic growth spurring broader poverty reduction.

(4) According to the World Food Program, more than 6,700,000 people in Haiti (out of a population of about 10,000,000) are considered food insecure nationally.

(5) In October 2010, an unprecedented outbreak of cholera in Haiti resulted in over half a million reported cases and over 8,000 deaths to date, further straining the capacity of Haiti's public health sector and increasing the urgency of resettlement and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) efforts.

(6) The international community, led by the United States and the United Nations, mounted an unprecedented humanitarian response in Haiti, with donors pledging approximately \$10,400,000,000 for humanitarian relief and recovery efforts, including debt relief, supplemented by \$3,100,000,000 in private charitable contributions, of which approximately \$6,400,000,000 has been disbursed and an additional \$3,800,000,000 has been committed as of September 30, 2013.

(7) The emergency response of the men and women of the United States Government, led by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States Southern Command, as well as of cities, towns, individuals, businesses, and philanthropic organizations across the United States, was particularly swift and resolute.

(8) Since 2010, a total of \$1,300,000,000 in United States assistance has been allocated for humanitarian relief and \$2,300,000,000 has been allocated for recovery, reconstruction, and development assistance in Haiti, including \$1,140,000,000 in emergency appropriations and \$95,000,000 that has been obligated specifically to respond to the cholera epidemic.

(9) Of the \$3,600,000,000 in United States assistance allocated for Haiti, \$651,000,000 was apportioned to the USAID to support an ambitious recovery plan, including the construction of a power plant to provide electricity for the new Caracol Industrial Park (CIP) in northern Haiti, a new port near the CIP, and permanent housing in new settlements in the Port-au-Prince, St-Marc, and Cap-Haïtien areas.

(10) On October 9, 2013, the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives held an oversight hearing on the status and effectiveness of post-earthquake United States aid to Haiti, following a House of Representatives-mandated, year-long Government Accountability Office (GAO) report

that was highly critical of some aspects of USAID's recovery effort.

(11) According to GAO, as of June 30, 2013, USAID had disbursed just 31 percent of its reconstruction funds in Haiti, the port project was 2 years behind schedule and over budget by an estimated \$189,000,000, the housing project has been reduced by 80 percent, and the sustainability of the power plant, the port, and the housing projects were all at risk.

(12) GAO further found that Congress has not been provided with sufficient information to ensure that it is able to conduct effective oversight at a time when most funding remains to be disbursed, and specifically recommends that a periodic reporting mechanism be instituted to fill this information gap.

(13) Donors have encountered significant challenges in implementing recovery programs and nearly 4 years after the earthquake an estimated 171,974 people remain displaced in camps, unemployment remains high, corruption is rampant, land rights remain elusive, allegations of wage violations are widespread, the business climate is unfavorable, and government capacity remains weak.

(14) For Haiti to achieve stability and long term economic growth, donor assistance will have to be carefully coordinated with a commitment by the Haitian Government to transparency, a market economy, rule of law, and democracy.

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to support the sustainable rebuilding and development of Haiti in a manner that—

(1) promotes efforts that are led by and support the Haitian people and the Haitian Government at all levels so that Haitians lead the course of reconstruction and development of Haiti;

(2) builds the long term capacity of the Government of Haiti and Haitian civil society;

(3) reflects the priorities and particular needs of both women and men so they may participate equally and to their maximum capacity;

(4) respects and helps restore Haiti's natural resources, as well as builds community-level resilience to environmental and weather-related impacts;

(5) provides timely and comprehensive reporting on goals and progress, as well as transparent post program evaluations and contracting data;

(6) prioritizes the local procurement of goods and services in Haiti where appropriate; and

(7) promotes the holding of free, fair, and timely elections in accordance with democratic principles and the Haitian Constitution.

SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that transparency, accountability, democracy, and good governance are integral factors in any congressional decision regarding United States assistance, including assistance to Haiti.

SEC. 5. REPORT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and every 180 days thereafter through September 30, 2016, the Secretary of State shall submit to Congress a report on the status of post-earthquake recovery and development efforts in Haiti.

(b) **CONTENTS.**—The report required by subsection (a) shall include—

(1) a summary of the Haiti Rebuilding and Development Strategy, including any significant changes to the strategy over the reporting period and an explanation thereof;

(2) a breakdown of the work that the United States Government agencies other than USAID and the Department of State are conducting in the Haiti recovery effort, and the cost of that assistance;

(3) an assessment of the progress of United States efforts to advance the objectives of the Haiti Rebuilding and Development Strategy through the "Post-Earthquake USG Haiti Strategy: Toward Renewal and Economic Opportunity" produced by the Department of State, compared to what remains to be achieved to meet specific goals, including—

(A) a description of any significant changes to the Strategy over the reporting period and an explanation thereof;

(B) an assessment of progress, or lack thereof, over the reporting period toward meeting the goals and objectives, benchmarks, and timeframes specified in the Strategy, including—

(i) a description of progress toward designing and implementing a coordinated and sustainable housing reconstruction strategy that addresses land ownership, secure land tenure, water and sanitation, and the unique concerns of vulnerable populations such as women and children, as well as neighborhood and community revitalization, housing finance, and capacity building for the Government of Haiti to implement an effective housing policy;

(ii) a description of efforts to construct and sustain the proposed port, as well as an assessment of the current projected timeline and cost for completion; and

(iii) a description of efforts to attract and leverage the investments of private sector partners to the CIP, including by addressing any policy impediments;

(C) a description of the quantitative and qualitative indicators used to evaluate the progress toward meeting the goals and objectives, benchmarks, and timeframes specified in Strategy at the project level;

(D) the amounts committed, obligated, and expended on programs and activities to implement the Strategy, by sector and by implementing partner at the prime and subprime levels (in amounts of not less than \$25,000); and

(E) a description of the risk mitigation measures put in place to limit the exposure of United States assistance provided under the Strategy to waste, fraud, and abuse;

(4) a description of measures taken to strengthen, and an assessment of, Haitian governmental and non-governmental organizational capacity to undertake and sustain United States-supported recovery programs;

(5) a description of United States efforts to consult and engage with Haitian Government ministries and local authorities on the establishment of goals and timeframes, and on the design and implementation of new programs under the Post-Earthquake USG Haiti Strategy: Toward Renewal and Economic Opportunity;

(6) a description of efforts to consult and engage with Haitian civil society and grassroots organizations on the establishment of goals and timeframes, and on the design and implementation of new programs under the Post-Earthquake USG Haiti Strategy: Toward Renewal and Economic Opportunity, as well as efforts to coordinate with and engage the Haitian diaspora;

(7) consistent with the Government of Haiti's ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, a description of United States and Haitian Government efforts to strengthen Haitian Government institutions established to address corruption, as well as related efforts to promote public accountability, meet public outreach and disclosure obligations, and support civil society participation in anti-corruption efforts;

(8) a description of efforts to leverage public-private partnerships and increase the involvement of the Haitian private sector in recovery and development activities and coordinate programs with the private sector and other donors;

(9) a description and assessment of efforts to address the particular needs of vulnerable populations, including internally displaced persons, women, children, orphans, and persons with disabilities, in the design and implementation of new programs and infrastructure;

(10) an description of the impact that agriculture and infrastructure programs are having on the food security, livelihoods, and land tenure security of smallholder farmers, particularly women;

(11) a description of mechanisms for communicating the progress of recovery and development efforts to the Haitian people, including a description of efforts to provide documentation, reporting and procurement information in Haitian Creole; and

(12) a description of the steps Haiti is taking to strengthen its capacity to receive individuals who are removed, excluded, or deported from the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume just to share with the Members here that on January 12, 2010, there was a massive earthquake that struck near the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, leaving some 220,000 people dead and 1.5 million people displaced. Since 2010, the United States has made a big commitment in humanitarian relief and a big commitment to reconstruction and development assistance in Haiti. A good bit of this was allocated to the U.S. Agency for International Development to support an ambitious recovery plan that included housing and industrial development.

Last summer, the House Foreign Affairs Committee received a GAO report detailing a startling lack of progress on U.S.-funded reconstruction efforts in Haiti. The committee followed up by sending a bipartisan delegation of staff to investigate and then held an oversight hearing on Haiti reconstruction, where Members asked tough questions about USAID efforts.

One recommendation we heard over and over was that Congress needs improved and more frequent reporting to ensure that we are being kept up to date on reconstruction activities and so that Congress can provide tough oversight at a time when much of the funding for Haiti has yet to be spent. Wasted taxpayer funding is simply unacceptable here.

While we can help, Haitians must do better. As Haiti Special Coordinator Thomas Adams noted in his testimony before the committee:

The key to sustainable improvement in Haiti lies not in the generosity of donors but, rather, in the creation of economic opportunity.

I agree wholeheartedly with the special coordinator. But, unfortunately, Haiti currently lacks a clear and enforceable system of property rights, including effective property registry and titling, and struggles with high levels of corruption. These are serious problems which deter the kind of private sector investment that is the real future of Haiti's economy.

Without significant improvements to Haiti's business climate, no amount of donor assistance is going to help. We need to work with the Haitian Government to improve transparency, rule of law, and democracy so that we can, in turn, improve the lives and economic well-being of the country's citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentlewoman from California, Representative BARBARA LEE, the author of this bill, who worked with Ranking Member ENGEL, Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN, and Chairman SALMON to craft this strong, bipartisan oversight legislation that will improve relief efforts. And I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3509, the Assessing Progress in Haiti Act of 2013.

I would like to begin by thanking my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), for introducing this important legislation. The Haitian people are lucky to have a friend with her vision and tenacity.

It is difficult to overstate the devastation wrought by the 2010 earthquake in Haiti that gave rise to the multinational assistance effort: 316,000 people dead, which is just unbelievable, including 103 United States citizens, 101 United Nations personnel, and nearly 18 percent of the Nation's civil service; 300,000 injured; 115,000 homes destroyed; and 2 million people displaced. An estimated 15 percent of the population of Haiti was directly affected by the disaster and related damages.

I traveled to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, shortly after the quake, and I can attest to the fact that even those horrific statistics do not fully describe the waste and destruction I saw.

The United States quickly responded to the devastation in Haiti and responded robustly. In fact, the post-earthquake assistance program remains today among our most important foreign assistance commitments worldwide, which brings me to the bipartisan legislation before us.

H.R. 3509 should be understood as a culminating step in the ongoing oversight work of the Foreign Affairs Committee regarding that assistance plan.

A multiyear and multibillion-dollar commitment, reflecting the compassion and generosity of the American people, it calls for ongoing vigilance, both in terms of accountability as well as policy direction.

Our committee commissioned a GAO report on that assistance which found, among other things, that the administration was not providing sufficient information to the Congress to fulfill its oversight role. We also sent a bipartisan staff delegation to look into specific problems the GAO found and held a full committee hearing on the matter.

H.R. 3509 is the logical next step. It seeks to fill the information gap by requiring the State Department to report on various aspects of our assistance program. It also includes a statement of policy that articulates the direction we think that assistance program should take. I believe that H.R. 3509 goes a significant way to achieving that goal.

As I seem to do frequently in our committee and on the floor these days, I would like to once again thank the gentleman from California, Chairman ROYCE, and his wonderful staff for working in a truly bipartisan manner on this bill. It is genuinely appreciated by me and all of my Democratic colleagues on our committee.

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

Mr. ROYCE. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, first let me thank Chairman ROYCE for his tremendous leadership, for his continued support, and for his true efforts to create bipartisan initiatives in the legislation coming out of the committee. I have served with him on the committee for many, many years, and it has always been consistent in terms of trying to reach a bipartisan agreement on these bills. So, again, I thank him very much.

And, of course, to the gentleman from New York, Ranking Member ENGEL, thank you, again, for your leadership and for helping to craft a bill that we could get to the floor, which is a bill that I think will really put the United States on the right side of history as it relates to Haiti, and also for your focus on the Western Hemisphere.

Let me also just thank all of the original cosponsors of the Assessing Progress in Haiti Act of 2013, including Representatives YVETTE CLARKE, FREDERICA WILSON, MAXINE WATERS, JOHN CONYERS, CHARLIE RANGEL, GREGORY MEEKS, KAREN BASS, and, of course, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. I want to thank my colleague SHEILA JACKSON LEE for staying strong and steady and supporting this legislation. And I thank them also for their tireless work and longstanding commitment to the well-being of Haitians and the country of Haiti.

Nearly 4 years ago, I stood as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus and led a Special Order, recognizing the importance of our relationship with Haiti. A short time later, I led a delegation to Haiti where we witnessed the destruction and devastation firsthand.

The Congressional Black Caucus has a long history of working with the Haitian people and the Haitian American community on a variety of issues.

□ 1615

We share a close and longstanding relationship. This has continued under the magnificent leadership of our current chair, Chairwoman MARCIA FUDGE.

On January 12, 2010, a devastating 7.0 earthquake struck near Haiti's capital. This terrible earthquake killed hundreds of thousands and left 1 million more homeless.

Our government, the American people, and the international community responded with a tremendous outpouring of support for the Haitian people. However, what began as a swift and effective relief effort gave way to a sluggish reconstruction.

A report by the Government Accountability Office, also cited by Chairman ROYCE, found that USAID has missed a number of its own goals and deadlines. Most importantly the GAO found that as of June, 2013, USAID had committed only 52 percent, and disbursed 35 percent, of the \$651 million in funding for earthquake reconstruction.

That is why passing the Assessing Progress in Haiti Act of 2013 is so important. With so much money yet to be disbursed, we have an opportunity to ensure that our assistance is as effective as possible.

My bill helps us understand where our aid efforts stand, where they are going, and how USAID plans to get there. It would require the State Department to report on the progress of infrastructure projects, indicators used to measure project success, efforts to combat corruption, measures taken to strengthen Haitian capacity, and considerations of vulnerable populations.

My bill would give us the information we need to make those assessments and help get the reconstruction on track.

No one is saying that this will be easy. The road to recovery is a long one, and this legislation is but one small step.

We must also keep in mind that USAID cannot fix the problem on its own. I commend the agency for the work it does around the world and encourage it to continue to address the challenges it faces in Haiti.

Haitian citizens and their government, along with nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations, must do their part. The Haitian Government will need to hold free, fair, and timely elections. I commend them for the steps they have already taken this week to hold long overdue elections next year.

The United Nations will also need to vigorously address the cholera epidemic. There is no question that in October 2010, after nearly a century of not having cases of cholera in the country, it was introduced by U.N. peacekeepers.

As I said before, I am very proud today that we are voting to increase the transparency and accountability of U.S. assistance to Haiti on a bipartisan basis. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I look forward to continuing to work with them to ensure that Haiti is truly built back better and that the Haitian people once and for all have a future—and that future will be ensured by the support of the American people.

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

Mr. ENGEL. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you.

I want to thank Chairman ROYCE's and Ranking Member ENGEL's staffs. I want to especially thank my staff, Pablo and Jirair, and all of our staffs here for their very diligent and steadfast work. This has taken us probably about 4 years to get this bill to the floor.

Thank you again, Chairman ROYCE, Ranking Member ENGEL, and all of the original cosponsors for their tremendous support.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. It is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE).

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the gentlelady from California for yielding time for me to speak in support of H.R. 3509, the Assessing Progress in Haiti Act. As a representative of the second largest population of first- and second-generation Haitian Americans and Haitian immigrants, I appreciate the importance of the bill.

It is critical that we expand communication between the executive branch and Congress to keep track of all monetary aid sent to Haiti, ensuring increased accountability and transparency.

After the alarming findings of the GAO report and since the January 2010 earthquake, Haitians still live in IDP camps; they continue to fight the cholera epidemic; and with the Haitian Government's very evident challenges in maintaining a sustainable democracy, it is imperative that Congress has all the information necessary to ensure that U.S. foreign aid is being administered effectively.

Mr. Speaker, as we look to the fourth anniversary of the horrific earthquake, I am hopeful of the day when we can witness the full recovery and rebirth of the beautiful Caribbean nation of Haiti. But until then, we have a lot of work to do, and that is why I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 3509, the Assessing Progress in Haiti Act.

Mr. ENGEL. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. SHEILA JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the ranking member and the chairman of the full committee for their leadership and also for the bipartisan leadership that is noted on the Foreign Affairs Committee on which I had privilege to serve some years ago when we worked on a number of issues.

Let me add my appreciation to the Congresswoman from California, BARBARA LEE, who led us during her tenure as the chairman of the Black Caucus during an enormous crisis in Haiti and, more importantly, as a supporter of this legislation and efforts to see Haiti move into a new era of democracy and reconstruction.

This legislation, H.R. 3509, is long overdue. I ask my colleagues to enthusiastically support it.

I traveled to Haiti on any number of occasions, visiting those who are incarcerated in jails, and even after the earthquake, to find individuals who were suffering and had been incarcerated and seeing people who had lost their place to live, children who were out of school, and resources that were looking to be directed but possibly, Mr. Speaker, not being directed as they should.

This legislation, of course, will do several things. It will require a thorough assessment of the progress in meeting the original goals expressed in January 2011, Post-Earthquake U.S. Haiti Strategy; provide a description of efforts to combat corruption and ensure public accountability; and assess whether or not vulnerable populations have been taken into account in the design and implementation of the new program.

It is very important to note that even though much has been done, between the efforts of the international community and including USAID, up to 3,000 people still live in tent camps, many of whom are facing forced evictions as time moves on.

Cholera has killed over 8,400 Haitians and sickened over 689,400 since the time of this earthquake. Hundreds of thousands of Haitians have little or no access to potable water or basic health services, and Haiti is facing an impending food crisis, according to local and international organizations.

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

Mr. ENGEL. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. H.R. 3509, I believe, will be an important step to gather all those who are of good intention, particularly the aid offered by the USAID, to be able to assess where we are and to be able to not only help, but feel the pain of those who have not been helped. I believe that it will be enormously important to look, again, at infrastructure, as it has impacted Port-au-Prince and the outer areas, which I think this legislation will be very helpful to.

Again, it is bipartisan. We ask that this legislation be passed quickly in the Senate and, more importantly, that the President sign it to save lives.

Finally, we wish for a democratic transition and democratic elections. As Haiti goes forward in its election, let's hope whatever government is put in place will be able to give that lifeline that this legislation is talking about to move Haiti forward in the 21st century.

I ask my colleagues to support the legislation, and I thank Congresswoman BARBARA LEE for her leadership.

Mr. Speaker, as an original co-sponsor, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3509, the "Assessing Progress in Haiti Act of 2013," which requires the Secretary of State to submit to Congress regular, detailed reports on the status of post-earthquake recovery and development efforts.

I thank my Congressional Black Caucus colleague, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE of California, for her leadership on this legislation.

I also thank Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman ROYCE (R-CA), Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL (D-NY), and Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida for their support and leadership in shepherding this important legislation to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, nearly four years after Haiti's devastating earthquake, there is still far too little transparency and accountability around U.S. relief and reconstruction aid efforts.

There are close to 300,000 people still living in tent camps, many of whom are facing forced evictions. Cholera has killed over 8,400 Haitians and sickened over 689,400 since it was first introduced to Haiti in October of 2010.

Hundreds of thousands of Haitians have little or no access to potable water or basic health services, and Haiti is facing an impending food crisis according to local and international organizations, and the government of Haiti.

H.R. 3509 will greatly assist Congress in overseeing U.S. assistance in Haiti by providing lawmakers, the U.S. public, and Haitians with key details on the manner in which U.S. taxpayer money is being spent.

According to the GAO, "Congress lacks information on the amounts of funds obligated and disbursed and program-by-program progress of U.S. reconstruction activities [in Haiti]."

Among other highlights, this legislation would: require a thorough assessment of the progress in meeting the original goals expressed in the January 2011 Post-Earthquake U.S. Government Haiti Strategy; provide a description of efforts to combat corruption and ensure public accountability; and assess whether vulnerable populations have been taken into account in the design and implementation of new programs.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Haiti continue to face tremendous challenges and still our help.

That is why it is essential that we ensure that U.S. assistance to Haiti is delivered efficiently is more essential than ever.

H.R. 3509 will help achieve this goal. I urge all Members to join me in voting for this legislation.

Mr. ROYCE. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, as we can all hear from the discussion here this

afternoon, this is a very, very important bill and a very, very much needed bill. We have the most generous people in the world in the United States. We need to give help to this island which has been so devastated, which is really very near us geographically, and where we have many ties, particularly now, with the burgeoning Haitian American population as well.

This is humanitarian. This is really what is right. This personifies and I think typifies the good intentions of this Congress and of our Nation. I am proud to play a part in this.

I want to again thank BARBARA LEE for all her hard work and thank Chairman ROYCE for, as we always say, a bipartisan effort. This is truly bipartisan and truly something of which we can all be proud.

I urge a "yes" vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, just in closing, let me point out again the fact that we have a very strong bipartisan coalition of Members that have worked a long time on this issue of trying to forge a focus on repair in Haiti. We thank them for their efforts on the reconstruction.

It is important for the people of Haiti to know that our efforts are best being used to help get them on solid ground and to help them get the foundation they need to move forward. It is also important for those in the United States to feel that their money is being spent wisely and efficiently. I think that is the intent behind this legislation, H.R. 3509.

It extends and strengthens, I think, the critical oversight that we do in the committee over Haitian funding, and it promotes the holding of free, fair, and timely elections in Haiti.

I want to thank the gentlelady from California, Congresswoman LEE, for her perseverance in getting this bill to the floor today. I want to encourage my colleagues to support it. I want to thank the ranking member, Mr. ENGEL of New York, also for his efforts to bring this bill up today.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 3509—the Assessing Progress in Haiti Act.

I would like to commend my colleague, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, for introducing this legislation and I am happy to be an original cosponsor of this important bill aimed to provide greater oversight of U.S. taxpayer funding for reconstruction efforts in Haiti.

This bill calls for a State Department review of the U.S. funded recovery and development efforts in Haiti, which began over three years ago in the wake of the deadly 2010 earthquake.

In June of 2012, then-Ranking Member Berman and I requested that the GAO investigate the progress of reconstruction efforts in Haiti.

This report was important to ensure that American dollars are going to the Haitian people who are truly in need and not resulting in fraud, waste and abuse.

This year, GAO issued the report and I was disappointed to learn that three years after the

earthquake, emergency relief efforts were still woefully disorganized, with much of the funds: not reaching the Haitian people; USAID is suffering to get some programs off the ground; and the lack of coordination between U.S. federal agencies is inadequate.

As of March 2013, USAID had obligated only 45 percent and disbursed 31 percent of funding for Haiti from the Supplemental Appropriations Act from 2010.

Meanwhile, delays continue to mount and goals are being scaled back.

For example, USAID originally planned to build 15,000 new homes.

That number has been decreased to just 2,600 homes causing 62,000 fewer people who will be given shelter as they attempt to recover from this humanitarian disaster.

The American people deserve to know that their tax dollars are being spent wisely and at the same time we must ensure that we are helping the Haitian people recover from the earthquake and poverty.

This requires a clear and comprehensive strategy to improve the situation on the ground for the people of Haiti.

Lastly Mr. Speaker, this resolution makes it U.S. policy to promote the holding of free, fair, and timely elections in accordance with democratic principles and the Haitian Constitution.

It is encouraging to see that the Haitian Parliament has passed a new electoral law and it has recently been signed by their President.

This positive step forward can now set in motion the necessary requirements in order to hold senatorial and local elections next year—elections that have been long overdue since 2011.

The U.S. government will stand ready to help the Haitian government hold these elections and ensure that every Haitian has the right to vote for their elected representatives.

Once again, I am thankful that this important bill is on the floor today and I urge my colleagues to support this measure to ensure our oversight responsibility over U.S. taxpayer dollars in Haiti.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3509, 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.

□ 1630

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS RESOLUTION, 2014

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 438, I call up the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 59) making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes, with the House amendment to the Senate amendment thereto, and I have a motion at the desk.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). The Clerk will designate the Senate amendment.