

The legislation being considered today ensures that Street Outreach Programs can rely on funding already available through the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

This allows the Department of Health and Human Services to provide street-based services such as individual assessments, treatment, counseling, or access to emergency shelter for runaway and homeless youth who are also victims of trafficking. Because of the overlap that often occurs with homelessness and trafficking, this just makes good sense.

Additionally, it is important that we provide the necessary resources to States, organizations, and other entities to train staff working with these victims. This additional training, authorized by this bill under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act research grants, will allow service providers to successfully address and respond to the behavioral and emotional effects of abuse and assault.

Our bill ensures that staff training will also include ways to recognize and respond to the unique needs and circumstances of trafficking victims. This is a simple change but an important one necessary to improve services available.

It is my hope that we can continue to work in this spirit of bipartisanship and work together to improve and strengthen programs that support our Nation's children, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE), the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and for his dedicated and hard work in combating sex trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, each year an estimated 300,000 innocent children fall victim to sex trafficking right here in the United States. The victims can be homeless or runaway youth. Others are simply taken from their parents in the blink of an eye. The victims' families are our neighbors, our friends, and our loved ones.

As a father of two and a grandfather of four, for me it is impossible to fathom the pain and suffering they must feel knowing their son or daughter is trapped in a modern-day slave trade filled with darkness and hopelessness. While we will never fully comprehend the grief these families are forced to bear, we can, as a Nation, fight this heinous crime with every tool available.

□ 1730

There are heroic efforts underway right now to locate victims of youth sex trafficking and return them to their families. Last week, the Edu-

cation and Workforce Committee had an opportunity to hear from John Ryan, who is the head of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

The center plays a vital role in a national effort to protect vulnerable youth, leading a partnership among law enforcement, government agencies, and private ventures like Honeywell, Google, and Lifetouch.

In my home State of Minnesota, the center has helped resolve cases involving 1,699 endangered runaways and 373 family abductions. The center's 24-hour CyberTipline has provided law enforcement more than 2 million leads of child sexual exploitation.

The center and its staff provide an invaluable service to families. They stand on the front lines of this critical battle each and every day. Despite these and other achievements, we know more can be done to protect our most vulnerable youth.

Right now, many kids are falling through the cracks of child welfare systems. Often, they are not properly identified as sex trafficking victims when they enter the system and are then lost in the shuffle once they are in State custody, and too often, runaway and homeless youth who are victims of sex trafficking do not receive the special help they need.

That is why I strongly support this legislation, which will enhance existing services for runaway and homeless youth. I am also proud to support legislation we will consider in just a few moments that will improve how State child welfare systems identify and respond to victims of youth sex trafficking.

Finally, we will also consider legislation that ensures victims are properly identified when reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children CyberTipline.

Mr. Speaker, we have to do more to address this national crisis. The bills the House is considering today move our country in the right direction. I am humbled to help lead this bipartisan effort and urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

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

Mr. HECK of Nevada. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5076.

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.

STRENGTHENING CHILD WELFARE RESPONSE TO TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2014

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the

bill (H.R. 5081) to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to enable State child protective services systems to improve the identification and assessment of child victims of sex trafficking, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5081

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 "Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act of 2014".

SEC. 2. CAPTA AMENDMENTS.

Section 106 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5106a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(B)—

(i) by striking "and" at the end of clause (xxii); and

(ii) by adding at the end the following:

"(xxiv) provisions and procedures to identify and assess reports involving children who are sex trafficking victims, and which may include provisions and procedures to identify and assess reports involving children who are victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons described in section of 103(9)(B) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9)(B));

"(xxv) provisions and procedures for training representatives of the State child protective services systems about identifying and assessing children who are sex trafficking victims, and which may include provisions and procedures for such training with respect to children who are victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons described in section of 103(9)(B) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9)(B)); and

"(xxvi) provisions and procedures for identifying services (including the services provided by State law enforcement officials, the State juvenile justice system, and social service agencies, such as runaway and homeless youth shelters) and procedures for appropriate referral to address the needs of children who are sex trafficking victims, and which may include provisions and procedures for the identification of such services and procedures with respect to children who are victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons described in section of 103(9)(B) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9)(B));";

(B) in paragraph (2)(D)—

(i) by striking "and" at the end of clause (v);

(ii) by inserting "and" at the end of clause (vi); and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

"(vii) the provisions and procedures described in clauses (xxiv) and (xxvi) of subparagraph (B);"; and

(C) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by striking "and" at the end of subparagraph (A);

(ii) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting "and"; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

"(C) SEX TRAFFICKING VICTIM.—The term 'sex trafficking victim' means a victim of—
 "(i) sex trafficking (as defined in section 103(10) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(10))); or

“(ii) a severe form of trafficking in persons described in section 103(9)(A) of such Act (22 U.S.C. 7102(9)(A)).”; and

(2) in subsection (d), by adding at the end the following:

“(17) The number of children identified under clause (xxiv) of subsection (b)(2)(B), and of such children—

“(A) the number identified as sex trafficking victims (as defined in subsection (b)(4)(C)); and

“(B) in the case of a State that has provisions and procedures to identify children who are victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons described in section 103(9)(B) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9)(B)), the number so identified.”.

SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pension of the Senate, a report that—

(1) describes the specific type and prevalence of severe form of trafficking in persons to which children who are identified for services or intervention under the placement, care, or supervision of State, Indian tribe, or tribal organization child welfare agencies have been subjected as of the date of enactment of this Act;

(2) summarizes the practices and protocols utilized by States to identify and serve—

(A) under section 106(b)(2)(B) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)), children who are victims of trafficking; and

(B) children who are at risk of becoming victims of trafficking; and

(3) specifies any barriers in Federal laws or regulations that may prevent identification and assessment of children who are victims of trafficking, including an evaluation of the extent to which States are able to address the needs of such trafficked children without altering the definition of child abuse and neglect under section 3 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5101 note).

(b) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

(1) SEVERE FORM OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.—The term “severe form of trafficking in persons” has the meaning given the term in section 103(9) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(9)).

(2) VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING.—The term “victim of trafficking” has the meaning given the term in section 103(15) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(15)).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5081.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 5081, the Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act of 2014. Mr. Speaker, human trafficking has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. Young people are being forced into manual labor or commercial sexual activity in what has become a \$32 billion a year industry.

While we are fighting trafficking with every tool available, there is more that can be done. The fact remains that domestic child trafficking is a serious problem in the United States. Around 300,000 American youth are at risk of sexual commercial exploitation and trafficking per year.

Through my involvement with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, I have seen the exploitation and horrific abuses trafficking victims have to endure. As an emergency room physician, I have seen the physical, emotional, and psychological trauma inflicted on victims, and as a father, it sickens me to think that one of my children could become a victim.

As a Member of Congress, I have worked on legislation to help address this problem and held a local roundtable in Nevada with victims, advocacy, and law enforcement groups.

H.R. 5081, the Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act of 2014, will help protect child victims by improving practices within State child welfare systems to identify, assess, and document sex trafficking victims.

This legislation amends the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to direct States to implement and maintain procedures to identify and assess reports involving children who are victims of sex trafficking.

Additionally, this bill requires that States train child protective services workers on how to identify these children and the services necessary to meet their needs, and it would improve reporting on the number of children identified as sex trafficking victims.

The bill also requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to report on the type of prevalence of youth trafficking victims in the welfare system, provide a summit of State practices for serving youth trafficking victims, and report on any barriers in Federal law that prevents the identification and assessment of youth victims of trafficking.

Instead of properly identifying and assisting trafficked and exploited children, these children are often sent to the juvenile justice system, where they are labeled and treated as criminals. These innocent victims are victimized again by the very system that was designed to protect them.

This bill works towards a positive solution that ensures child welfare agencies have the appropriate systems in place to properly identify, assess, and document child victims of sex trafficking, instead of treating them as criminals.

It is imperative that we continue to pass legislation that helps victims of

both labor and sex trafficking to ensure that victims receive the services they need to escape a life of abuse.

Again, I would like to thank Chairman KLINE of the Education and the Workforce Committee, as well as the other original cosponsors of this legislation—Representatives KAREN BASS, MICHELE BACHMANN, TOM MARINO, JIM MCDERMOTT, and LOUISE SLAUGHTER—for their hard work on this bill.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act of 2014 and reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BASS. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5081, the Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act of 2014, and I would like to thank Chairman KLINE and Ranking Member MILLER for their support and collaboration on creating momentum for this policy that will be a critical step towards preventing child sex trafficking. I appreciate both their insight and assistance in bringing this bill to the floor today.

I also want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Representative MARINO. He has been a tireless advocate for children in the foster care system. Mr. MARINO, along with the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth co-chairs, Representatives MCDERMOTT and BACHMANN, all served as original cosponsors of the Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act, and their continuing commitment to transforming the child welfare system has brought national attention to the intersection between child sex trafficking and the child welfare system.

The U.S. Department of Justice reports that more than 300,000 children in the country are at risk of sexual commercial exploitation and trafficking each year. These are 300,000 too many, and tragically, this number shows that a comprehensive and aggressive response is needed in order to combat child trafficking throughout the country.

In my city, the Los Angeles County Probation Department reports that 61 percent of identified trafficking victims are foster youth. The Los Angeles STAR court is a specialized collaborative courthouse designed to serve commercially exploited youth and reports that 80 percent of these girls have been previously involved in the child welfare system.

As cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth, I have had the opportunity to travel throughout the country as part of our nationwide listening tour. Unfortunately, the stories I have heard from advocates and youth is that children in the child welfare system continue to be preyed upon by traffickers who use their vulnerability as an opportunity to exploit them.

The stories that emerge are those like Caroline's, a young girl who grew up in a household where she was physically, sexually, and emotionally

abused. When Caroline was just 13 years old, a 35-year-old man attended a sporting event at her school and deceived her into believing that he loved her and would give her the attention she craved.

Instead, this man began to sell Caroline to numerous men for sex. Throughout this time, she had many encounters with the child welfare system, but no one picked up that she was a victim of trafficking. The social workers did not have the training or the proper tools to assess that she needed specialized services.

Our bill would ensure that children like Caroline do not slip through the cracks, as State and county child welfare departments have protection plans that will outline provisions and procedures to identify and assess all reports of children known or suspected to be victims of sex trafficking.

State systems do not currently have the proper protections, services, or protocols to adequately serve those in the system who have been victims of trafficking. States also lack such support for victims who enter the child welfare system.

In fact, during a site visit recently on the Foster Youth Caucus listening tour to Missouri, a law enforcement officer told us that he had no other option but to arrest the girls, to ensure that they receive the proper services.

In Los Angeles, the child sex trafficking unit of the county probation department specifically addresses the needs of child victims, and it is the only such division in the country. I commend their critical work and commitment to ensure the trafficking victims receive the resources they need.

We must not continue to arrest these children in order to provide them with these services. Our bill will be a first step toward ensuring that there are policies and procedures in place to connect child sex trafficking victims to public or private specialized services.

Last year, in a meeting with children in the child sex trafficking unit of the Los Angeles County Probation Department, the girls all echoed the same sentiment. While they were grateful to have the resources they needed to begin to deal with their trauma, they felt stigmatized by having to be arrested in order to receive these services.

Our bill would ensure that each State has a training plan for child protective service workers to appropriately respond to reports of trafficking, so that trafficked children would be provided the same resources as youth in the child welfare system and be classified as victims of crime, not as criminals.

We have story after story across the country of children being raped and sold as if they were little more than objects, but we do not have the concrete data to help them find the appropriate services. H.R. 5081 requires that, within 1 year, the Department of Health and Human Services report to Congress on the prevalence and types of trafficking they have encountered.

Many advocates believe that labor trafficking is also a critical issue with children in the child welfare system. The reality is we need hard data to evaluate what is happening to the children, so that proper resources can be allocated in the future. Our bill also allows States to establish the same policy and procedures for children if they are victims of labor trafficking.

The report will also assess State practices used to identify and serve trafficking victims and Federal laws and policies that may prevent States from supporting these victims, including the absence of trafficking in the Federal definition of child abuse and neglect under CAPTA, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

These critical steps to reforming our child welfare system will help ensure that victims are provided with the same resources and access as other children. I strongly urge my colleagues to support our bill and continue to build momentum to combat domestic child sex trafficking.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman from Nevada for yielding. I also want to thank my friend from California (Ms. BASS) for introducing this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, you are going to find tonight that there are eight bills dealing with sex trafficking in the United States. You will also find that these are bipartisan bills, and a lot of different Members are involved in this legislation, which goes to say that on this issue of modern-day slavery—the human sex trafficking that is taking place—Members of Congress are working together in many different ways to come to the same conclusion to present legislation to the House floor.

I would just encourage the Speaker in his role to get the Senate to bring up this legislation as soon as it all passes, either tonight or tomorrow.

We have already had some good pieces of legislation pass, a piece of legislation called the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, sponsored by CAROLYN MALONEY from New York, a Democrat, and myself, a Republican from Texas. That is about as bipartisan as you can get, Mr. Speaker. We don't even speak the same language, but it passed the House 2 weeks ago, 409-0.

The House of Representatives is moving as fast as we can and as carefully as we can to deal with this scourge of modern-day slavery. You don't get much talk about it in the national media. It is just not one of those controversial issues, but it is being done, and that is a good thing.

□ 1745

Mr. Speaker, there are two types of minor sex trafficking that are taking place. There are children from foreign countries that are being sold and delivered to the United States for sex traf-

ficking, and then there are Americans, kids that live in the United States, that are being sold and delivered throughout the United States for domestic sex trafficking. It is increasing for a lot of reasons, but awareness is one of those reasons—or lack of awareness is a reason that we want to hopefully stop—and the awareness needs to go to parents and children about what can take place.

Also, when sex trafficking with minor children takes place, as my friend Ms. BASS from California has said, when that child is rescued by law enforcement, they don't have anyplace to take them. There is no housing for those individuals, so they put them in the juvenile justice system for their safety. But, yes, they are labeled. They are given that stigma of a criminal. Even though it is juvenile criminal, they are still a criminal.

They are not a criminal, Mr. Speaker. They are victims of crime, victims of slavery.

For example, in the United States, there are 5,000 animal shelters, and they are great. I have got three dalmatians—I call them the weapons of mass destruction—and two of them came from dalmatian rescue. But, Mr. Speaker, there are only 300 beds for minor sex-trafficked children in the United States. That is it. There aren't any more.

So we need to have the ability to take those children when rescued by law enforcement or by child protective services or whoever to a shelter where they have a place that they can stay other than the jailhouse. That is one of the most important things that we can do.

As the gentleman from Nevada has said, this scourge is a multimillion dollar business. It is second only to the illicit drug trade. The reason is because children can be sold more than once each day—some up to 20 times. Drugs are sold one time. Plus, the risk of apprehension and the consequences for drugs is a whole lot more than that of sex trafficking, and therefore that is why it is the second, will soon be the highest, income for illicit activity, criminal activity, because there is no risk involved.

So those are some things that are being addressed by these eight pieces of legislation tonight. They are all good, and they are all bipartisan. They are supported by most Members. There are a lot of cosponsors on all of that legislation. Hopefully, we can get all eight of those pieces of legislation passed and sent down the hallway to the Senate and get their attention and vote on these.

And that is just the way it is.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington State, Mr. McDERMOTT.

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Strengthening

Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act of 2014.

Today, more than 293,000 American youth are at risk of sexual commercial exploitation and trafficking each year. Far too often, State child welfare systems fail to properly identify and assist trafficked and exploited children. The protective services and protocols established for abused and neglected children within the child welfare system are rarely extended to trafficked children and youth. In many States, such children are often not even categorized as victims.

I would point out that we have on our borders today 57,000 youngsters who have come in whatever way they have come to our attention. One of the real dangers in sort of sending people back into whatever is that you may well be sending them back into sexual trafficking. This is one of the issues that should be looked at in every case where you find a youngster roaming the streets. States have got to look at this issue and figure out a way to deal with it.

We know that youngsters when they age out of foster care have no skills, they have no job, and they have very little to keep themselves alive, and, therefore, they easily become victims of sexual trafficking. This is an issue that this country, if we really care about children, we are going to look carefully at every kid and what are the risks to which they are being exposed.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MARINO), the cochair of the Foster Care Adoption Caucus.

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5081.

It is an absolute outrage that between 100,000 and 300,000 American youth are currently at risk for becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking right here in the United States.

Although we know there are many factors that make youth particularly vulnerable to traffickers and exploiters, such as age range, history of abuse, living in an impoverished community, and many others, the most astounding indicator a child will be trafficked is whether or not he or she is in foster care—in the foster care system at all.

In 2013, 60 percent of the child sex trafficking victims recovered as part of an FBI nationwide raid from over 70 cities were children from foster care or group homes. Make no mistake about it. Our foster care system provides an essential service to our communities and our children. In fact, my wife and I have housed children from this system. However, we are simply not doing enough to protect these children from being preyed upon.

This is why I have worked with my colleague, Congresswoman KAREN BASS, to introduce H.R. 5081, the Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act of 2014. This bill would make much-needed reforms to

the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to ensure States increase their child protection service plans and that we increase the data being reported to Congress.

To enact good law in Congress, we simply need as many facts at our fingertips as possible. Sadly, criminals in the child trafficking industry have become adept at lurking in the shadows and evading law enforcement, leaving us with very poor records and data on the activity.

This is why Congresswoman BASS and I are calling on States to work with us to strengthen our records and data logs so that we can more effectively craft laws to stop these criminals moving forward.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important bipartisan bill, because when it comes to those who are the most innocent among us, they deserve as much protection as possible.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York, Ms. YVETTE CLARKE.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS) for her tireless commitment to the children of our Nation's child welfare system and for extending time to speak on this timely and important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the House's legislative efforts to combat human trafficking, a very cruel form of modern-day slavery. I urge all my colleagues to support the legislation before us, including H.R. 5081, the Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act, a bill that seeks to improve the child welfare response to trafficking by requiring States to have procedures for identifying, assessing, and documenting child victims of trafficking. H.R. 5081 would also help identify, assess, and document child victims of sex trafficking throughout the United States.

Unfortunately, human trafficking is a big, booming business, and I cannot—and I will not—stand idly by and watch as our country becomes the center for smuggling human beings and human sexual exploitation.

We have a major crisis on the border of our Nation and in big cities like New York and others across the Nation that have been exacerbated and enabled by highly organized crime syndicates. If we understand the methods these groups use and begin by eliminating their sources of revenue, we can save people from human rights abuses and exploitation. Young girls are sold as sexual property, and boys and men are forced to work for cheap labor after they are convinced to sign unfair labor contracts. Their government documents are taken from them, and they are left with no one and nothing.

The people who want to do harm to our most vulnerable are likely to get more money from trafficking a child for sex than from the illicit drug trade. Awareness concerning human traf-

ficking has increased significantly in recent years, but awareness is not enough.

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

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. The United States is now considered a destination country according to the United States Department of State. Yes, Mr. Speaker, you heard it correctly. Human trafficking isn't something that is just occurring in other countries or other continents. It is happening right here in America.

In the United States, human trafficking rakes in \$9.8 billion for the use and abuse of victims, many of whom are children. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimates that each year 100,000 children are falling victim to the industry within our own borders.

I am proud to join my colleagues and the ever-growing number of Americans who are standing up to the objectionable practice of human trafficking. Congress is taking the additional steps to protect our children with this legislation. Again, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5081 and all of the legislation concerning human trafficking before the House. The time is now to protect children from being victims of human trafficking.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FARENTHOLD).

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to support H.R. 5081, the Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act of 2014.

It has been estimated that more than 293,000 children in the United States are at risk of sexual exploitation, many of whom are imported into this country along the routes used by the drug traders across the Rio Grande and moved through Texas. This form of modern-day slavery is absolutely unacceptable. No one, especially children, should have to endure this kind of cruelty. We cannot ignore that child trafficking is a serious problem taking place right here in our own backyard in the United States of America.

Unfortunately, many State child welfare systems do not identify and assist these exploited children appropriately. This bill strengthens the response to child trafficking by conditioning grants to States on their creating plans to protect children from these abuses and atrocities.

We had a hearing of the Homeland Security Committee in Houston and learned that often the trafficked children are not considered victims. They are considered the perpetrators. We have got to educate the police departments. We have got to educate the officers on the street. We have got to educate all of America that these children are victims. They need help. They don't need to end up in the juvenile justice system being treated like criminals.

This legislation would help identify children who were forced into sex trafficking and require States receiving grants to train their child protective services workers to appropriately respond to these activities.

Ideally, the child sex trafficking industry would not even exist. Unfortunately, the monetary motivations and God knows what else keep it going. It is happening right here, and we have got to stop it. This bill and the other bills on the floor of the House tonight take very important steps to combat this scourge.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support it and thank Representatives BASS and KLINE for moving us forward in this important endeavor.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

(Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to speak today in support of the Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act of 2014. I would like to thank my good friend and colleague, Congresswoman KAREN BASS, for introducing this bill and for all she does on behalf of foster youth.

Foster youth are some of the most at-risk children in our society. They are often victims of abuse or neglect, and too many face trials and tribulations beyond their years. So much that we take for granted—a stable home, living with our siblings, or returning to the same school year after year—are constant obstacles for these children.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation before us today will specifically address the link between girls in foster care and sex trafficking, and it will require States to develop a child protection plan to identify and assess all reports involving children known or suspected to be victims of trafficking.

□ 1800

Additionally, States must provide training plans for child protective services workers to appropriately respond to reports to child trafficking and have procedures in place that will connect child victims to public or private specialized services.

So I want to echo the comments of so many of my colleagues who have spoken here today. I commend Congresswoman BASS and Congressman KLINE, and all those who have had a hand in this legislation and who are looking out for the welfare of our children. I am proud to support this bipartisan legislation. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this day and the oppor-

tunity to be on the floor to have the Nation recognize the value of our children and the importance of protecting them. In particular, I thank Ms. BASS and Mr. MARINO for their leadership of the Foster Care Caucus, work that has been so important across America, and I thank the Education Committee with Mr. MILLER and Mr. KLINE for aspects of this legislation.

But I remember, Mr. Speaker, walking the streets of Houston with Covenant House and finding in cubbyholes homeless children, homeless teens. Many of them had aged out, and many of them during that time when the language wasn't clear had been prostituted, they were being sex-trafficked. No one was helping. So I am excited about legislation that recognizes that this act of ignoring them is child abuse, and that we need to ensure that they are not criminals and that the child welfare system understands their needs.

I was the first to bring to Houston a Homeland Security hearing on human and sex trafficking. It was an emotional hearing. The stories that were being told through law enforcement and those who had been victimized as children and how their lives were ruined would raise the hairs on your head. So I support all of these human trafficking initiatives, particularly as they take children away from the criminal justice system, and I look forward to Homeland Security moving more toward understanding this through the international process, and our Nation recognizing that, as has been said before, that the unaccompanied children are themselves victims of sex trafficking and need due process protection.

But we start at home. Therefore, I look forward to introducing legislation dealing with the homeland security human trafficking component in that Department, but the legislation offered by Ms. BASS and Mr. MARINO, again, is a program that is long overdue. And I am grateful that we will now have a system where these children will be recognized not as criminals but will be recognized through the State child welfare system to identify and help these children that have been taken by this terrible industry. Mr. Speaker, and save their lives. The bills on the floor today will save the lives of our children. I ask support for all of the bills on human trafficking today.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5081, the "Strengthening Our Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act of 2014," which strengthens the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (Pub. L. 93-247) by requiring that state plans for federal grants for child abuse or neglect prevention and treatment programs include elements focused on human trafficking.

Trafficking in humans is a major problem across the globe and in our own country. As lawmakers, we have a moral responsibility to combat this scourge and protect our children, especially those without parents to care for them, from being exploited and falling through the cracks.

As the Founder and Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I understand how important it is to defend those who are too young to defend themselves.

This problem is personal for me because according to the U.S. Department of Justice, my home city of Houston, Texas is the epicenter of human trafficking in the United States with over 200 active brothels in Houston and two new ones opening each month.

Houston has also surpassed Las Vegas for the dubious distinction of having the most strip clubs and illicit spas serving as fronts for sex trafficking.

Human trafficking in Texas is not limited to Houston. During the 2011 Dallas Super Bowl, 133 underage arrests for prostitution were made and during this year's massive effort "Operation Cross Country" led by the FBI, several pimps were arrested.

Between 1998 and 2003 more than 500 people from 18 countries were ensnared in 57 forced labor operations in almost a dozen cities throughout the State of Texas.

Currently, our state child welfare systems do not properly identify and help the children that have been taken by this horrible industry. Even more disturbing is that the protections provided by our child welfare systems often do not extend to young victims of trafficking.

Hard as it is to believe, in some states trafficked youths are not even regarded or classified as victims. Rather, they are treated as youthful offenders and consigned to the criminal justice system.

These kids are not criminals. They are victims, robbed of their innocence by adult criminals. They are boys and girls who have been taken advantage of and are unable to escape an ugly system.

I support H.R. 5081 because it is focused on helping at-risk and vulnerable children and treat them as victims rather than treating them as criminals.

Specifically, the bill requires that state plans for Federal grants for child abuse or neglect prevention and treatment:

1. provide procedures to identify and assess all reports involving children known or suspected to be victims of sex trafficking;
2. provide training for child protection service workers to appropriately respond to reports of child sex trafficking; and
3. develop and implement policies and procedures to connect child victims to public or private specialized services.

Additionally, the bill requires States to report annually the numbers of children identified as victims of sex trafficking within the already existing National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System.

H.R. 5081 also requires the Department of Health and Human Services to submit a report to Congress outlining the prevalence and type of child trafficking nationwide as well as the current barriers to serving child victims comprehensively.

I strongly support H.R. 5081 and urge my colleague to join me in voting for its passage which will help bring an end to the evil practice that is child sex trafficking.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The fight against child sex trafficking is a bipartisan issue, and I appreciate that both parties have come

together today to support the development of legislation that would make a significant impact on one of the most vulnerable populations in our Nation.

The Strengthening Our Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act is an important step in ensuring that child welfare agencies have the proper systems in place to identify, assess, and document child victims of trafficking.

Stories like those of Caroline and the other young girls in the child sex trafficking unit of the Los Angeles County Probation Department are critical to understanding exactly the effect our bill would have in laying the foundation of transforming the way our Nation responds to child sex trafficking.

However, it is also important to recognize that this bill and the other bills on the floor today are steps on that journey, and there is still an enormous amount of work that needs to be done.

Again, I would like to thank members of the Education and Workforce Committee and the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth for their continued commitment to advancing policies that help change the lives of children.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my staff, Adriane Alicea, and especially my former deputy chief of staff, Jenny Wood, who did the lion's share of work to make this legislation happen, and without her hard work and dedication, this legislation would not be on the floor today.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard some compelling and moving stories this evening that underscore our moral obligation as a society to do all we can to combat this epidemic of child and human trafficking. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5081 and all of the related legislation that we will consider this evening.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act.

We all know that our nation's children are our most precious resource, and we wish that every child had the opportunity to grow up in a family that loved and protected them, but unfortunately that is not the case.

As a result, about 400,000 children are in the foster care system as we speak. In the last few years, there have been great improvements in how we care for foster children, particularly the focus on supporting youth as they age out of the system.

But there is a stain on the American foster care system that we have not adequately addressed: child sex trafficking. Child sex trafficking is truly one of the most deplorable and disgusting crimes any adult can commit, and it's our job to do all that we can to end it—especially when so many victims are children for whom we have taken responsibility in the foster care system.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children tells us that 60% of runaways who are victims of sex trafficking were at one time in the custody of social services or in foster care. In my home state of New York, 85%

of trafficking victims have prior child welfare involvement. While state-specific numbers vary throughout the country, they all tell us that something more needs to be done.

To add insult to injury, far too often, state child welfare systems fail to properly identify and assist trafficked and exploited children. Instead of being cared for and supported, these children are often sent to the juvenile justice system and criminalized for, at no fault of their own, being raped and trafficked! These children are victims, and we have a moral obligation to protect them.

I'm a proud original co-sponsor of the Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act, which would help identify exploited children, train child protective services workers to appropriately respond to them, and connect child victims to specialized services so that they can begin the process of recovery. I am particularly pleased that this legislation includes a directive for HHS to report on any barriers in Federal laws or regulations that may be preventing States from properly identifying, assessing, and serving children who are victims of trafficking. I believe one such barrier is that currently, under the Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act, young victims of trafficking are not automatically defined as victims of abuse and neglect. Making a definitional change would ensure that these children, who are clearly victims, are supported and protected, not sent to the juvenile justice system for prosecution. I look forward to receiving this report next year and working with my colleagues to make that change for the sake of these young people who deserve our protection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HECK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5081.

The question was taken.

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

Ms. BASS. 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 motion will be postponed.

MISSING CHILDREN'S ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5111) to improve the response to victims of child sex trafficking, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5111

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

SECTION 1. RESPONSE TO VICTIMS OF CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING.

Section 404(b)(1)(P)(iii) of the Missing Children's Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5773(b)(1)(P)(iii)) is amended by striking "child prostitution" and inserting "child sex trafficking, including child prostitution".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5111.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and rise in support of H.R. 5111.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the House of Representatives continues its commitment to providing the necessary tools and policies to help reduce child sex trafficking and better serve these victims in the United States. I want to thank Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY for her leadership on this issue and for introducing H.R. 5111, which will improve the ability of law enforcement officials and others to respond to and assist these victims.

For too long these victims have been viewed as willing participants and have been treated as actors in the criminal scheme. However, we now know that oftentimes individuals are trapped as victims by human trafficking organizations, and sadly, many of these victims are children.

As previous House efforts have done, the bills today attempt to change for the better how we view these victims. Congresswoman BEATTY's legislation will ensure that we view victims of sex trafficking not as participants but as victims, and ensure that child sex trafficking crimes are reported.

Under current law, the National Center For Missing and Exploited Children, NCMEC, operates a CyberTipline to provide online users and electronic service providers a means of reporting Internet-related child sexual exploitation in many areas, including child prostitution. However, children who are sex-trafficked or sexually exploited should be treated as victims, not criminals. In fact, approximately one out of seven runaway youth are likely victims of sex trafficking, and roughly one out of three youths are lured into prostitution within 48 hours of running away from home.

For this reason, H.R. 5111 would replace the term "child prostitution" with "child sex trafficking" in the CyberTipline reporting categories to reinforce that children who are sex-trafficked or sexually exploited are victims whose situation should be taken seriously when reported. It would also ensure the public recognizes that child prostitution is included in how NCMEC uses the term "child sex trafficking," and thus should still be reported to the tip line.

Again, I want to thank Congresswoman BEATTY, along with the Education and Workforce Committee and