

The Human Trafficking Prioritization Act does just that. By raising the status of the J/TIP "office" to that of a "bureau" and encouraging the Secretary of State to upgrade the "ambassador-at-large" position to that of an "assistant secretary," H.R. 2283 builds upon the acknowledged accomplishments of the J/TIP.

It will give the J/TIP and the Ambassador-at-Large who leads it level standing with regional and functional bureaus within the State Department and prevent countries and other bureaus at the agency from gaming the tier ranking system. It achieves this without creating additional bureaucracy or additional cost to the government.

As a member of the Congressional Human Trafficking Task Force working with the congressional leadership, J/TIP, and international anti-trafficking groups to end sex slavery, I know it is critical to keep the fight against human trafficking from being consumed in a bureaucratic shuffle. I am convinced that the Human Trafficking Prioritization Act will only serve to enhance the vital work undertaken by the J/TIP.

Human trafficking targets the most vulnerable in a society. The Human Trafficking Prioritization Act will give the J/TIP the integration and voice it deserves within the Department of State to ensure nations are diligent in their efforts to protect the victims and punish the perpetrators of human trafficking.

Again, I thank Mr. SMITH for introducing this bill and I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Judiciary and Homeland Security Committees, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2283, "Human Trafficking Prioritization Act of 2014."

I support this bipartisan legislation which modifies the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to elevate the status of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking to that of the Bureau to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which shall be headed by an Assistant Secretary of State.

The office produces the annual Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report), which is Congress' primary resource for human trafficking reporting, analysis and recommendations for the United States and 186 countries around the world. The TIP Report also contains tier rankings of each country on which it reports, which are used to help protect victims, prevent trafficking and prosecute traffickers.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with many thoughtful observers that the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking would be even more effective in carrying out the duties mandated by Congress in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 if its status was elevated from that of "Office" to a "Bureau" within the department hierarchy and the title of its chief administrator elevated from "director" to Assistant Secretary of State."

Human trafficking is a problem for the United States because the U.S. State Department estimates that approximately 17,500 foreign nationals are trafficked into the United States, the largest number of people trafficked into the United States come from East Asia and the Pacific and the next highest numbers coming from Latin America and Europe.

It is estimated 2.8 million children living on the streets of this nation are at risk for trafficking into the sex industry. Children who are

abused or victims of molestation are most vulnerable.

If they are lured into human trafficking they are isolated from the rest of the world and start living lives controlled by pimps, escort and massage services, private dancing clubs, pornographic clubs and much worse.

Mr. Speaker, this bill requires the Secretary of State to report to Congress within 90 days of enactment on how long each assistant secretary designation has been in existence, and whether the designation was legislatively mandated or authorized.

According to a Northwestern Journal of International Human Rights Report Mexican authorities are working to address the problem of trans-border human trafficking, but the country's "legal framework remains largely untouched and hence limited in its crime-fighting scope and effectiveness."

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Houston, Texas is one of the nation's largest hubs for human trafficking, 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.

In 2006, the Department of Justice National Conference on Human Trafficking identified the I-10 corridor as one of the main routes for traffickers. Interstate I-10 links the major Texas urban areas Houston, San Antonio and El Paso and dozens of mid- and small sized towns in between.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important things that can and must continue to be done is to raise public awareness of the continuing prevalence of modern day slavery and human trafficking.

Raising the visibility and status of the governmental entity charged with the responsibility of documenting the problems, successes, and remaining challenges confronting the United States and the international community in eradicating the scourge of human trafficking is a positive step forward in achieving this goal.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting passage of H.R. 2283.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2283, 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.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION ACT

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4449) to amend the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to expand the training for Federal Govern-

ment personnel related to trafficking in persons, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4449

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 "Human Trafficking Prevention Act".

SEC. 2. EXPANDED TRAINING RELATING TO TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.

Section 105(c)(4) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(c)(4)) is amended—

(1) by inserting ", including members of the Service (as such term is defined in section 103 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 3903))" after "Department of State"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following: "Training under this paragraph shall include, at a minimum, the following:

"(A) A distance learning course on trafficking-in-persons issues and the Department of State's obligations under this Act, targeted for embassy reporting officers, regional bureaus' trafficking-in-persons coordinators, and their superiors.

"(B) Specific trafficking-in-persons briefings for all ambassadors and deputy chiefs of mission before such individuals depart for their posts.

"(C) At least annual reminders to all such personnel, including appropriate personnel from other Federal departments and agencies, at each diplomatic or consular post of the Department of State located outside the United States of key problems, threats, methods, and warning signs of trafficking in persons specific to the country or jurisdiction in which each such post is located, and appropriate procedures to report information that any such personnel may acquire about possible cases of trafficking in persons."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MEADOWS. 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 bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the bill, H.R. 4449, to amend the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to expand the training for Federal Government personnel related to trafficking in persons, and for other purposes.

I thank the gentleman from New York for his leadership in addressing this issue.

As we look at this, this particular bill would require appropriate personnel of the Department of State, that they would be trained in identifying victims of severe forms of trafficking and provide for the protection of those victims.

H.R. 4449 would specify three minimum training requirements in that underlying statute: one, a distance learning course for Embassy and bureau personnel dealing with trafficking issues; two, trafficking briefings for all ambassadors and DCMs before they head to their postings; and, three, annual reminders to appropriate personnel regarding key trafficking problems and issues related to their countries.

The State Department believes that these specified forms of training largely track their current activities; thus, while adding these examples to the statute will ensure that these types of training will continue, it will not result in a substantial and additional cost.

Again, I thank the leadership, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY) as the primary sponsor of this, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of my bill, H.R. 4449, the Human Trafficking Prevention Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also thank my colleague, Mr. MEADOWS, for his leadership on this bill. I would like to thank the Democratic whip—my friend, the gentleman from Maryland, STENY HOYER—and his staff for the work they dedicated to this piece of legislation and to my own staff.

Worldwide, less than 1 percent of an estimated 27 million victims of human trafficking have been reported, and in the past year, only about 44,000 survivors have been identified.

Millions—literally millions of children, women, and men are trafficked each year and forced into modern-day slavery as part of the world's most evil and fastest growing industry. It may seem like it only happens on the other side of the world, but it is happening here in quiet neighborhoods across our country.

Some of those survivors are from neighborhoods I represent in the Hudson Valley of New York. In New Windsor and Newburgh, for nearly 4 years, one man would troll the streets, coercing at least 10 women to work for him as sex workers in local motels.

Last year, law enforcement authorities uncovered an international sex trafficking ring operating brothels in Yonkers, Poughkeepsie, and Newburgh, where women were brutalized and forced to have sex 10, 20, 30 times a day.

It is a hard truth, but it is a truth nonetheless. This disgusting, this horrifying practice of modern-day slavery happens here, right here in our own neighborhoods, in our own backyards, in our own country.

Even with the assistance of law enforcement and dedicated organizations like My Sister's Place in Westchester and Safe Homes of Orange County, groups which help survivors rebuild their lives, New York continues to be

one of the top hubs of human trafficking where sex trafficking, child labor, child sex trafficking, and indentured servitude happen all too frequently.

In another community in Hudson Valley about an hour away from New York City, a man tricked teenage girls to travel to the United States on tourist visas from countries like Brazil, Hungary, and France. He instructed these women to lie to both Immigration and State Department officials in order to gain access to our country.

It is precisely this kind of situation that my legislation seeks to stop. We must ensure that our men and women on the front lines of our borders have the resources and training they need in order to identify and stop human trafficking at its source before these women and children and men become victims.

As part of our goal to end human trafficking, we can make sure that our foreign service officers and other government personnel have the tools and training they need to spot, to identify these victims and stop this trafficking across international borders.

In the past, the State Department estimated that between 14,500 and 17,000 foreign nationals were trafficked into the United States every single year. Although the Federal Government has a zero tolerance policy on human trafficking, our foreign service officers, who often have face-to-face contact with these victims when they are obtaining U.S. visas, currently undergo minimal training to define, identify, and recognize the indicators of human trafficking or smuggling.

My legislation would expand new minimum training procedures for foreign service officers and other government personnel in order to identify and stop human trafficking at its source and take action before people are trafficked across international borders before it becomes too late, when they are already in the United States and already victimized.

Since we know criminals will do just about anything to adapt and to avoid being caught, this legislation also requires annual updates on key problems, threats, methods, and warning signs of trafficking.

I want to thank my colleagues across the aisle because, by working across the aisle, we have a new opportunity to come together to combat this absolutely monstrous practice of trafficking in children, women, and men.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support my legislation, H.R. 4449, the Human Trafficking Prevention Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to close by saying that anything we can do, certainly, to continue to highlight this particular issue, whether it is with the State Department or laws within our Nation, gives us a rare opportunity to affect lives

not only here in the United States, but across the world.

I would like to thank the committee work for those on the Foreign Affairs Committee, their diligence and hard work here at a late hour—certainly our own personal staffs, congressional staffs, for their work too. So many times, they don't get mentioned.

With that, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4449, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Judiciary and Homeland Security Committees, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4449, the "Human Trafficking Prevention Act."

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their stewardship in bringing this legislation to the floor and for their commitment to expanding the training and capability of Federal government personnel in detecting and combating human trafficking and assisting its victims.

Throughout my tenure in Congress and a founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I have advocated on behalf of victims of human trafficking, especially children, who are the most vulnerable and innocent victims.

I am also committed to ensure that law enforcement agencies have the tools, resources, and training necessary to identify, apprehend, and prosecute criminals who ruthlessly traffic in people.

H.R. 4449 strengthens the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 by amending it to require training related to trafficking in persons for all State Department personnel. Specifically, the bill requires the following:

1. A distance learning course on trafficking in persons issues and the Department of State's obligations under the Act to be completed by embassy reporting officers, regional bureaus' trafficking in persons coordinators, and their supervisors;

2. Specific trafficking-in-persons briefings for all ambassadors and deputy chiefs of mission before they depart for their posts; and

3. Annual reminders to all such personnel and other federal personnel at each diplomatic or consular post of the Department of State located outside the United States of key human trafficking problems, threats, methods, and warning signs.

This legislation does for the State Department what the Jackson Lee to H.R. 4660, "Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Act for 2015," does for the Justice Department.

That amendment, adopted earlier this year by the House, provides another tool in law enforcement's arsenal to tip the balance in favor of victims by ensuring funding for the Attorney General to provide training for State and local law enforcement agencies on immigration law that may be useful for the investigation and prosecution of crimes related to trafficking in persons.

Mr. Speaker, trafficking in humans, and especially child trafficking, has no place in a civilized society and those who engage in this illicit trade should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

To effectively combat human trafficking, we need to provide resources and training to government personnel to assist victims and apprehend criminals.

By providing the necessary training and support, we will catch more human trafficking criminals and save lives, and prevent many other persons, including children, from becoming human trafficking victims.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4449, the Human Trafficking Prevention Act of 2014.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4449.

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.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 3230, PAY OUR GUARD AND RESERVE ACT

Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Peters of California moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 3230 (an Act to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes) be instructed to—

(1) recede from disagreement with section 702 of the Senate amendment (relating to the approval of courses of education provided by public institutions of higher learning for purposes of the All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program and the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program conditional on in-State tuition rate for veterans); and

(2) recede from the House amendment and concur in the Senate amendment in all other instances.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of the Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014, which the Senate passed on a bipartisan 93-3 vote last month.

It is no secret that the Department of Veterans Affairs is failing to keep our Nation's promise to our veterans and their families.

Ensuring that our veterans have access to the medical care and benefits that they have earned is one of the most important jobs of Congress and a top priority of mine, given the more than 200,000 veterans who live in San Diego County.

In recent months, failures at the Phoenix VA and other facilities across

the country demonstrated a culture of complacency and ineptitude that is unacceptable and must change.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my colleague from Phoenix, KYRSTEN SINEMA.

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from California (Mr. PETERS) for offering this motion to instruct and for his leadership and work on behalf of veteran and military families.

This motion urges House conferees to accept language in the Senate bill that ensures post-9/11 veterans receive in-state tuition at colleges and universities, regardless of their home State. This concept was overwhelmingly supported by the House of Representatives when it passed the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act in February.

I am a cosponsor of the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act, authored by Chairman MILLER, and I appreciate his bipartisan leadership and dedication to improving opportunities for veterans. Tuition fairness gives our veterans a better chance to achieve the American Dream.

In April of 2011, as a State senator, I authored and led the effort to pass this same law in Arizona. I am proud to now be a part of the national effort to make college more affordable for our veterans.

As David Lucier, president of the Arizona Veterans and Military Leadership Alliance, said:

This is an opportunity to create the 'next greatest generation' by investing in our veterans as they move out of uniform—to being scholars—to becoming national and global leaders.

I couldn't agree more. Acting on tuition fairness is the right thing to do. Acting on a VA reform bill is also the right thing for Congress to do. But in Arizona, we are not waiting for Congress to act. We are making sure that veterans receive the care they need right now.

In Phoenix, we recently cohosted the Veterans First Clinic, which brought together community providers, the Phoenix VA, and over 20 veteran-serving organizations to help veterans access services. We are leveraging community-based providers to make sure veterans receive timely access to care, and we are holding the VA accountable through monthly reporting meetings. We are moving forward while Washington drags its feet, because in Arizona we believe that veterans and their families should come first. But more action is required.

I appreciate the bipartisan work to advance a VA reform bill, especially from Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD. I call on the conferees to move quickly to produce commonsense reforms that can be signed into law. By working together, we can address this crisis and create a VA system that our veterans deserve.

Again, I thank my colleague from California for offering this motion.

Mr. PETERS of California. I thank my colleague, Ms. SINEMA.

While San Diego's VA centers have performed better than most, and the backlog of benefits claims has been reduced significantly in my region, we can't ignore the larger structural reforms that the entire VA system clearly needs.

In San Diego, my district office staff has been working to help veterans and their families who have experienced the bureaucratic red tape at the VA firsthand. Since coming to Congress last year, we have handled more than 400 veterans' cases and have recovered more than \$750,000 in benefits to which these veterans were entitled.

I have also focused on ways to make the transition from Active Duty service back to civilian life an easier one for veterans and their families. Last year, I engaged with military commanders, nonprofits, and veterans' advocacy organizations to launch the Military Transition Support Project. This collaborative community effort will provide a central hub of information for servicemembers as they become veterans and search for housing, employment, and benefits. It is on its way to being a national model and doesn't cost the Federal Government or taxpayers a dime.

The experience of Dr. Howard and Jean Somers, constituents of mine from Coronado, has only added to my urgency in addressing reform at the VA. The Somers' son Daniel served our country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. As the Somers testified in the House Veterans Affairs Committee 2 weeks ago, their son made several attempts after returning home from combat to seek help and counseling for posttraumatic stress but was ultimately unsuccessful, and eventually he took his own life. The VA system failed Daniel Somers; it failed his parents; and that is unacceptable.

Both the Senate and the House have taken action to make real, substantive changes at the VA. I voted for many of these measures in the House, but the Senate's plan is comprehensive, bipartisan, and is the best opportunity for the quick action that our veterans deserve.

It will benefit thousands of veterans by increasing their access to care by allowing the VA to lease more facilities, hire doctors and nurses to fill their most pressing staff shortages, and by allowing veterans to see non-VA providers if they have been forced to wait for an appointment or live too far from the closest facility.

It would increase accountability on those responsible for the recent failures by allowing the VA Secretary to fire complacent employees, and through changes to the scheduling, staffing, and administrative processes in each facility.

Part of my motion also has to do with ensuring that our veterans and their spouses are able to access a high-quality education after their time of Active Duty has ended.

Veterans are advancing themselves at colleges and universities across my