

Committee on Homeland Security in S. 2651, the "DHS OIG Mandates Revision Act of 2014". The measure passed the Senate by unanimous consent on September 17, 2014 and was additionally referred to the Committee on Homeland Security.

In the interest of permitting the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to proceed expeditiously to the House floor, I will forgo further consideration of S. 2651. However, I do so with the following reservation. By eliminating mandates of Inspector General investigations, Congress lessens its voice in oversight of the Department of Homeland Security. Under this lawless Administration, Congress should have more of a voice, not less, in what the Office of Inspector General investigates.

In addition, I will forgo consideration with the mutual understanding that the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security is in no way diminished. I further request that you urge the Speaker to name Members of this Committee to any conference committee that is named to consider such provisions.

Finally, I request you include this letter and your response into the Congressional Record during consideration of S. 2651 on the House floor. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,

Washington, DC, December 10, 2014.

Hon. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: Thank you for your letter regarding the Committee on Homeland Security's jurisdictional interest in S. 2651, the DHS OIG Mandates Revision Act of 2014.

I appreciate your willingness to forego consideration of S. 2651, and weet that by forgoing action on this legislation, the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security is in no way diminished. Additionally, I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

Finally, I will include our letters in the Congressional Record during House floor consideration of the bill. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

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

I rise in support of this legislation. As summarized by my colleague from California, it alleviates the Office of Inspector General of the United States Department of Homeland Security from having to perform three annual audits.

Repeating these audits will help to slightly reduce the burden of congressionally mandated reports. All this information is available to us in other forms and it is good to get rid of these reports, which are sometimes not really sent anyway.

By the way, Mr. HUNTER, congratulations on the recently passed Coast Guard legislation.

Furthermore, eliminating the mandate will allow the IG to reallocate re-

sources to something really useful, like finding out what went wrong, wherever it might be. This way, the legislation may improve the oversight of programs and the activities of the Department of Homeland Security, which would be extremely useful to Congress.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2651.

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.

UNITED STATES COTTON FUTURES ACT AMENDMENTS

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5810) to amend the United States Cotton Futures Act to exclude certain cotton futures contracts from coverage under such Act.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5810

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

SECTION 1. EXCLUDING CERTAIN COTTON FUTURES CONTRACTS FROM COVERAGE UNDER UNITED STATES COTTON FUTURES ACT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c)(1) of the United States Cotton Futures Act (7 U.S.C. 15B(c)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking "except that any cotton futures contract" and inserting the following: "except that—

“(A) any cotton futures contract”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(B) any cotton futures contract that permits tender of cotton grown outside of the United States is excluded from the coverage of this paragraph and section to the extent that the cotton grown outside of the United States is tendered for delivery under the cotton futures contract.”.

(b) APPLICATION.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to cotton futures contracts entered into on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill, H.R. 5810.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he

may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND), my colleague.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5810.

This bill would meet the cotton industry's growing need for a rural contract for cotton on the United States market.

H.R. 5810 offers a simple technical fix that is needed due to the outdated 1916 Cotton Futures Act in terms of recognizing the global cotton trade.

Recent discussions with USDA revealed that the 1916 Cotton Futures Act requires all cotton tendered on a cotton futures contract that is listed for trading on a U.S. exchange to be classified by the USDA. This is unrealistic, both logistically and financially, for non-U.S. cotton stored in warehouses outside the U.S.

The industry's desire to trade and hedge a more modern contract requires a legislative tweak to the 1916 Cotton Futures Act to allow for any non-U.S. cotton tendered toward this U.S. contract to be inspected and classed by non-USDA personnel.

Our proposal would not change the regulation of the contract, nor the current USDA classing requirement that U.S. cotton must be classified by the USDA personnel.

Additionally, this bill also would not impact fees being generated by the USDA in the classing of U.S. cotton, tendered toward the existing cotton futures.

Here is the bottom line. For the industry to be able to hedge the 2015 cotton crop, they will need a tweak to this futures act that they may petition the CFTC for the new world contract to be listed. If H.R. 5810 is not passed, a new contract would likely be listed at other exchanges in Europe or Singapore.

With such unanimous support for this contract and solution, we hope this effort will be considered technical in nature and adopted quickly.

I urge my colleagues to support the measure.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As my colleague from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) has just eloquently stated, there is a great need for this, everybody is in agreement on it. The Cotton Number 2 contract is needed as a hedging tool for our cotton industry globally. It is needed so that we can have both delivery points inside as well as outside the United States because our global markets are now more global.

As my colleague, Mr. WESTMORELAND, mentioned, we have not touched this law since 1916. That is nearly 100 years. You can imagine so much has changed. It is very, very much more global, and we do not need to put our cotton participants in trade, in marketing, in commodities at a disadvantage, as was indicated, to other markets.

This is urgent. If we do not move within the next 3 weeks, so that we can

have this on the books as law in time for our cotton participants in the United States to be able to function for their year 2015—in the cotton business you start early, you start in January and February, so it is very urgent. The legislation benefits everybody. All participants are in agreement.

The bottom line is that this legislation is about modernization. Our markets, as I said before, have become much more global. It is a technical correction. It will help our cotton farmers, our cotton producers, and those who have to hedge in the marketplace around the world, and it does not—does not—put our cotton industry in the United States at a disadvantage globally.

I certainly urge that we all accept this amendment and move forward with a very, very important part of American industry, the cotton industry.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As my colleague said, Mr. Speaker, every year, cotton farmers prepare their fields. Off the field they must prepare as well, hedging risk and protecting themselves from possible disaster with cotton futures contracts on U.S. commodity exchanges.

The Cotton Number 2 contract, which is a U.S.-regulated contract, is the benchmark contract for the entire United States cotton industry. However, recently, a wide range of cotton industry participants have recommended the development of a world cotton contract with delivery points inside and outside of the United States. This is in recognition of the global nature of today's cotton industry.

The 1916 Cotton Futures Act requires that all cotton futures contracts that are listed on the U.S. exchange must be classed by the USDA, regardless of where the cotton is being stored. This structure is outdated and does not recognize the global cotton trade that exists today.

H.R. 5810 would simply allow for cotton futures contracts to be offered on a U.S. exchange that is based off of the world market price. This bill would neither change the regulation of the current futures contracts nor the current USDA classing, which requires U.S. cotton be classed again by USDA personnel.

With these technical changes in H.R. 5810, a new cotton futures contract will be available in U.S. commodity markets.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5810. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5810.

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.

AUTHORIZATION FOR THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Affairs be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5816) to extend the authorization for the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5816

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION AND TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.

The International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 is amended—

(1) in section 207(a) (22 U.S.C. 6435(a)), by striking “2014” and inserting “2015”; and

(2) in section 209 (22 U.S.C. 6436), by striking “September 30, 2014” and inserting “September 30, 2015”.

SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by this Act shall take effect as if enacted on December 10, 2014.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DENOUNCING USE OF CIVILIANS AS HUMAN SHIELDS BY HAMAS AND OTHER TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 107) denouncing the use of civilians as human shields by Hamas and other terrorist organizations in violation of international humanitarian law, with Senate amendments thereto, and concur in the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the use of human shields is unconscionable and morally unacceptable;

Whereas since June 15, 2014, there have been over 2,000 rockets fired by Hamas and other terrorist organizations from Gaza into Israel;

Whereas Hamas uses civilian populations as human shields by placing their missile batteries in densely populated areas and near schools, hospitals, and mosques;

Whereas Israel dropped leaflets, made announcements, placed phone calls, and sent text messages to the Palestinian people in Gaza warning them in advance that an attack was

imminent, and went to extraordinary lengths to target only terrorist actors and to minimize collateral damage;

Whereas Hamas urged the residents of Gaza to ignore the Israeli warnings and to remain in their houses and encouraged Palestinians to gather on the roofs of their homes to act as human shields;

Whereas on July 23, 2014, the 46-Member UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution to form a commission of inquiry over Israel's operations in Gaza that completely fails to condemn Hamas for its indiscriminate rocket attacks and its unconscionable use of human shields, with the United States being the lone dissenting vote;

Whereas public reports have cited the role of Iran and Syria in providing material support and training to Hamas and other terrorist groups carrying out rocket and mortar attacks from Gaza;

Whereas throughout the summer of 2006 conflict between the State of Israel and the terrorist organization Hezbollah, Hezbollah forces utilized innocent civilians as human shields;

Whereas al Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and other foreign terrorist organizations typically use innocent civilians as human shields;

Whereas the United States and Israel have cooperated on missile defense projects, including Iron Dome, David's Sling, and the Arrow Anti-Missile System, projects designed to thwart a diverse range of threats, including short-range missiles and rockets fired by non-state actors, such as Hamas;

Whereas the United States provided \$460,000,000 in fiscal year 2014 for Iron Dome research, development, and production;

Whereas during the most recent rocket attacks from Gaza, Iron Dome successfully intercepted dozens of rockets that were launched against Israeli population centers; and

Whereas 5,000,000 Israelis are currently living under the threat of rocket attacks from Gaza: Now, therefore, be it

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following:

That Congress—

(1) strongly condemns the use of innocent civilians as human shields;

(2) calls on the international community to recognize and condemn Hamas' use of human shields;

(3) places responsibility for the rocket attacks against Israel on Hamas and other terrorist organizations, such as Palestine Islamic Jihad;

(4) supports the sovereign right of the Government of Israel to defend its territory and its citizens from Hamas' rocket attacks, kidnapping attempts, and the use of tunnels and other means to carry out attacks against Israel;

(5) expresses condolences to the families of the innocent victims on both sides of the conflict;

(6) supports Palestinian civilians who reject Hamas and all forms of terrorism and violence, desiring to live in peace with their Israeli neighbors;

(7) supports efforts to demilitarize the Gaza Strip, removing Hamas's means to target Israel, including its use of tunnels, rockets, and other means; and

(8) condemns the United Nations Human Rights Council's biased resolution establishing a commission of inquiry into Israel's Gaza operations.

Amend the title so as to read: “A concurrent resolution denouncing the use of civilians as human shields by Hamas and other terrorist organizations.”

Mr. ROYCE (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading of the amendments.

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

There was no objection.